

# THE PERCEPTION OF CHILD POVERTY AMONG CAMEROONIAN FAMILIES

Children's Capabilities in Cameroonian households in Berlin

Doctoral Thesis

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## ABSTRACT

Why should the perception of child poverty in Cameroonian families in Germany be analysed? This is a question we had to deal with all through this research phase. Why does it matter to take time trying to understand how Cameroonian people perceive child poverty and how it can impacts the Capabilities of their children in the German setting?

Although the concept of poverty may seem obvious, experiencing it is a different story because of the way people perceive it. An interesting point in Cameroonian families in Berlin is that the concept of child poverty does not exist in their cultural background based on their languages. This is because children are viewed as their wealth.

This study is an investigation of the Cameroonian perception of child poverty in Berlin and the application of the Capability Approach on it. The aim is to find out according to this, the future life opportunities of children with Cameroonian background in Germany. The concern in this study is to give this particular migrant group in Berlin the opportunity to express themselves on their opinion of child poverty in connection to opportunities their children are likely to have for their future in Germany.

The choice of the perception of child poverty in Cameroonian households in Berlin is guided by several factors. First of all, Cameroonian migrants in Berlin leave their home country for the long term to a better life in Germany. It is therefore interesting to analyse their perception of child poverty in the new life setting. The second step is to analyse and establish if their particular perception of child poverty impacts their children's capabilities. Thirdly, the German population is ageing and reproducing less children than before, meaning that children with migrant background will play a central role in the future German society.

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Finally, this work is dedicated to the African child.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACRWC	African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
AZR	Ausländerzentralregisters
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CRC	Convention of the Rights of the Child
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys
MINASCOF	Ministère des Affaires Sociales et de la Condition Feminine
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
EU	European Union
UNCRC	United Nation convention on the Rights of the Child
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

## i. Introduction

This research study is an attempt to combine the African culture with the Capability Approach. The core of the study is to analyse the perception of child poverty in Cameroonian households living in Berlin, and then to confront this to the Capabilities of these children in the German context. To introduce this, it appeared very important to start by presenting the background of this research (i.a), before exposing the scientific contribution of this innovative study. Then the research problem and its questioning will be presented (i.c), before giving the structure of the research (i.d).

### i. a. Backdrop and purpose of the research

The concept of poverty may seem obvious, but as a matter of fact, experiencing poverty is individual and depends on the cultural background, since poverty might have different meaning (Tchegho 2002). For those Cameroonian parents interviewed in this research study, based on their language, the notion of “child poverty” does not exist in their culture. Some extracts of the interviews with parents can be more explicit to illustrate this. For example a mother said that she considers it *as African that a child is wealth*. Another mother stated that she *believes* according to her cultural background that *children are the wealth*. For these parents, it appears that, a child cannot be said to be poor, since a child is a wealth. The aim of this research is to analyse the perception of child poverty in Cameroonian households, according to their African cultural background. And then apply this to the Capability Approach to find out the future life opportunities of children with Cameroonian background in Berlin. Cameroonian migrants are a specific migrant group in Germany, and it is necessary to draw their migration profile to better understand their choice to live in Germany.

Migration can be defined as movements of people from one region to another and it is as older as the world: “For thousands of years, human beings have migrated in search of a better life” (IOM 2013: pp.31). All over the world, people change their homes for many different reasons and in very different ways so much so that migration seems to be a natural phenomenon; and some authors describe migration as a ‘human condition’ (Bilger & Kraler 2005: pp.6).

The word “migration” comes from the Latin word ‘migrare’ that refers to moving. Migration is the process by which people move from one place to another. And the notion of migration implies the notion of migrant. In 1998, the United Nations defined a migrant as someone who enters a foreign country and stays for at least 12 months, after having been absent for one year or longer (UN 1998: pp.17). But it should be recognized that “Migration is a multifaceted and a very complex global issue, which today touches every country in the world” (IOM 2005: pp.12). Over centuries, migrations were primarily thought to be of three types: “involuntary (e.g.: slave trade, exile, expulsion); semi-voluntary (e.g., economic dispossession, labour recruitment, indenture); and voluntary (self-actualization, the search for decency and betterment” (Hamilton 2007, part 1: pp.12). And these different migration types may have various motivations and purposes. Historically, human mobility between countries of the North and those in the South is an ancient phenomenon (M’ve 2011: pp.11). According to the IOM in 2005 and as reported by Bilger and Kraler, Africa is the continent with the *most mobile populations in the world* (Bilger & Kraler 2005: pp.9). This means that Africans are used to changing their place of residence in the search of a better place in and outside Africa. It would appear like migrations were inherent to Africa: “Africa is the only continent where Anthropologists have ever authenticated the creation of man. Based on irrefutable, scientific evidence, all human beings trace their common ancestry from Africa. For thousands of years, from this cradle of civilization, African descent people have spread throughout the world” (Merriweather Moore 2007: pp.3).

According to Hamilton (Hamilton 2007, part 1: pp.85), major development in the history of African descents dispersed around the world occurred in 1965 at the first Congress of African Historians convened in Tanzania to discuss emerging themes in African history. UNESCO published eight volumes of General History of Africa (1964) where some chapters deal with the African migration’s movements. In 1979 the Howard University in Washington D.C. published the first African Diaspora Studies, with the contribution of over 120 scholars, writers, and others from Africa, twenty French- and English speaking from European countries, and the United States to assess the state of studies on Africans and their relationship to people of African descents abroad. In 1981 the Second African Diaspora Studies Institute held in Kenya a meeting with the same agenda at the University of Nairobi. Most of these researchers focused on scientific

research on the African diaspora. African migrants were found in Europe in the mid 1920s.: “Seit der zweiten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts migrieren Afrikaner nach Europa” (McIntyre & al. 2004: pp. 21). And the African migration to Europe was increasing (Hamilton 2007, part 1: pp.225) as evident in the present European population nowadays. Today, dispersed communities of African descent are located *in every region of the world and in most countries* (Hamilton 2007, part 1: pp.6). In Germany for example, the African diaspora is also present, and Wolfram von Eschenbach presented in 1198 in the epic Parzival, the first image of Africans in Germany (Hamilton 2007, part 1: pp.225). It is however noteworthy to mention that an earlier contact of Africans in Berlin through the history is evident, when ‘Exotic People’- Nubians from Africa (Egypt and Sudan) were exhibited in Berlin, Hamburg, Frankfurt, and Dresden in 1877 (Reed-Anderson 2000: pp.16).

However this work will focus on migration of Cameroonian families to Berlin only. It will deal with this African migrant group in Berlin and the impact of their cultural background on the issues relating to their children. The analysis of the present research is by all means not a comprehensive migration research. The word ‘migrants’ will be used to refer to Cameroonian parents or their children in Berlin, even if they are naturalized Germans. In order to better makes a tie between a cultural background and the children’s Capabilities this work shall be limited to the Cameroonian migration to Germany and specifically Berlin and not all or any African migrations, since: “Most African migrations are not directed towards the global North, but towards other African countries” (Berriane and de Haas 2012: pp.1).

Germany is a rich Western European country and welcomes thousands of people from all over the world each year, because it is an attractive country for migrants who leave their home country with hope for a better life abroad. On May 9<sup>th</sup> 2011 the Zensus on a representation basis (Mikrozensus) showed that there were 6 169 340 foreigners in Germany, and the AZR corrected the figures to 6 647 512. According to the Zensus there were 372 280 foreigners living in Berlin, but according to the AZR there were 462 714 (Statistisches Bundesamt 2011). As Nauck, Clauß and Richter stated: “Die meisten Familien ausländischer Herkunft stammen aus Gesellschaften ohne ausgebaute Staatliche Systeme sozialer Sicherung” (Bertram 2008: pp. 136). This means that many migrants in Germany are looking for better life conditions abroad, because they come

from poor countries. The emigration population in Germany is young, over a quarter (27,2%) is less than 25 years old, which is about 6 Million (Bertram 2008: pp. 128). Yet, the birth rate is a very important issue in Germany, and in comparison with German native families, Cameroonian families in Berlin have many children, and this is the case with many other migrant families over Germany. Therefore, many children in Germany have a migrant background, and it makes sense to better grasp family Context in which these ‘migrant’ children grew up in, by examining the cultural background of their parents and how this may influence their future life in Germany.

Germany is no doubt a migrant country (Schott & Hornberg 2011: pp.555), the largest group of foreigners living in Germany nowadays are of Turkish origin with over three-million strong communities. This migrant group in Germany was originally regarded as ‘Gastarbeiter’ (guest workers) who had to return home. The Turkish workers were invited to Germany during West Germany’s economic boom that started in the mid-1950s when Germany faced an acute labour shortage. But some Turks decided to settle permanently in Germany, and now it is almost the third Turkish generation living in Germany. But there are also other migrant groups with children who decide to stay in Germany on a permanent basis. This work sets out to analyse the Cameroonian migrants with their children in Berlin because they are permanently established in Germany. It is important to mention that almost all Cameroonian parents residing in Berlin were all born in Africa and have the Cameroonian cultural background despite being naturalized Germans. The samples used in this work are limited for the sake of authenticity. This research is an analysis entirely based on the viewpoint of Cameroonian “migrants” in Berlin.

The issue of child Capabilities is important because it highlights whether and to what extent children are willing and prepared to strive to the fullest of their potential in their future lives. There is a need to go into the core of the Cameroonian family in Berlin to better describe this particular perception of child poverty, for this might have an impact in the future life of their offspring. As previously stated, the perception of child poverty will be examined in the core of this specific African group in Berlin. The aim is to collect data and opinions in these families to draw a profile of their perception of child poverty, and then to analyse the Capabilities of their children in Berlin in so doing.



The perception of child poverty is the way in which the poverty of children is understood or interpreted, knowing that people from different cultural backgrounds may perceive child poverty in very different ways. Persons from different cultural settings regard the poverty of a child very differently according to a particular value system. For instance on one hand, a Cameroonian household having only one child is perceived as 'poor' for Cameroonian people, even though such parents can best care for him/her financially and morally. Furthermore, lack of sibling is a "poverty factor" for Cameroonian families. Thus for Cameroonian people, a single child (KUI MOU) or children from small households (CHOUO'O LA'A<sup>1</sup>) are considered to be poor (Tchegho 2002: p78). This implies that children represent wealth. But when we take the case of a German cultural setting on the other hand, child poverty is seen as relative poverty (Bertram 2008: pp. 20). And this is mostly viewed as an issue of income inequality. Moreover, in Germany children may even be an impoverishment factor. Hurrelmann stated: "Die Ökonomischen Nachteile, die durch Kinder entstehen, sind unübersehbar, Kinder sind, finanziell gesehen, kein Reichtum, sondern sie machen arm" (Bertram & al. 1993: pp.65-66).

The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted in December 2006 an international definition of child poverty: "Children living in poverty are deprived of nutrition, water and sanitation facilities, access to basic health-care services, shelter, education, participation and protection, and that while a severe lack of goods and services hurts every human being, it is most threatening and harmful to children, leaving them unable to enjoy their rights, to reach their full potential and to participate as full members of the society". Children represent the future and the path to prosperity in any country. Not investing in children issues results in loss of opportunities and dynamic potential for the country. And this loss will hardly be regained in future. Children who grow up in poverty are likely to become poor offspring later on. Poverty therefore appears to be a generational inheritance. For this reason child poverty should be taken seriously and fought effectively. This work gives the floor to Cameroonian parents and their children (11-16 years) in Berlin, to analyse which definition of child poverty is applicable to them, and if this influences the Capabilities of these children in Berlin as far as their future life is concerned.

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<sup>1</sup> CHOU O'O LA'A designates monogamist households with little children by Bamiléké people (Baham) in Cameroon

Nevertheless, poverty remains a very complex phenomenon that can directly or indirectly impact the future life of children. The perception of poverty may be different in different contexts, and this determines how able people are to conduct their life in a particular way. To capture how people deal with their Capabilities, there is need for instance to understand about their life expectancy, health care, we also need to know about their education, their carrier, the way they enjoy freedom in personal and social relations as well as, family relationships and relations between family members. It is also important to look at how they relate with people around them, like their neighbours. All these points are meaningful for children to a certain extent because they share the family life. The motivation in this research comes from the concerns regarding different perceptions of child poverty and how it impacts their Capabilities in future.

Cameroonian parents in Berlin are mostly from the first migrant generation. All Cameroonian parents interviewed in this research grew up in Cameroon, and the way they deal with their children reflects their cultural background. It makes sense to briefly present the situation of children in the Cameroonian context where those parents grew up in.

Child poverty is topical even in the Cameroonian context but no study has analysed the perception of child poverty by Cameroonian people as a determinant factor of how parents deal with children issues. Some institutions and authors have investigated poverty topics regarding Cameroonian children. E.CAM is an Organisation which brings together those companies that want to solve the problem of poverty effectively by improving employment conditions. E:CAM reported especially on poverty among the Cameroonian youth, but the bottom line was the monetary variable which defines a household's poverty line. Nevertheless many surveys from The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) were conducted at the initiative of the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS). Since the mid-1990s the MICS fills data gaps through collecting and analysing data to evaluate the situation of children and women. The MICS makes statistics that make international households comparison possible on a range of indicators in the area of health, education, child, protection and HIV/AIDS. According to UNICEF, MICS results are used extensively as a basis for policy decision and programme interventions, or for purpose of influencing public opinion on the

situation of children and women around the world. The third round of MICS with reference to Cameroon took place in 2006. The MICS 3 was indeed involved in monitoring the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 with specific indicators relating to health, education or mortality in Cameroon. MICS 3 presented the living conditions of many Cameroonians which rolled back after the economic crisis in the 1980s. The authors Boniface Ngah Epo and Francis Menjo Baye suggested changes for Cameroonian families to get off poverty into growth and a better redistribution of income (2007). Other authors have declared that the root cause of poverty among Cameroonians is the direct tie between poverty and income distribution (Fambon & al. 2005) which deteriorates the living conditions of families. Some others accuse the economic policy to set a conducive ground for poverty (EMINI et al, 2006). The multidimensional poverty and the inequality approaches were also applied to the Cameroonian society (FOKO & al. 2007). But the living conditions of Cameroonian households were analysed before (Debok, 2001). The most interesting work done in this area as far as this research is concerned was from Simplicie Kitleur Lekeumo in “Mesure et analyse de la pauvreté non monétaire chez les enfants: le cas du Cameroun” (Measurement and analysis of monetary poverty to children: the case of Cameroon) in 2007. The main goal of Lekeumo’s work was to draw the profile of poverty regarding Cameroonian children. He thinks that poverty among Cameroonian children have almost nothing to do with poverty in households. Lekeumo’s work ties directly with the African solidarity and the community spirit (Betty Baba, 2010). This means that many Cameroonian children from poor households may not suffer from this poverty because of the sharing spirit and Solidarity between close family members and relatives. Such logic may seem paradoxical, but to understand it, the culture of Cameroonian people must be analysed in its core as aimed in this research. Cameroonian parents in Berlin grew up in this context and have a very strong cultural background. This means that they might have a particular perception of both concepts of children and poverty.

However, all these scientific studies on the concern of poverty in Cameroonian households have not effectively tackled the important question of the perception of child poverty by Cameroonian families. Statistics and poverty reports about Cameroonian children will not have any particular significance in it if they just give numbers and results from different criteria or different group of children. The young population in Germany is very

heterogeneous and this point should be taken into account in this research. This work will analyse the perception of child poverty of Cameroonians beyond their original context. The purpose of this work is to analyse in a qualitative study the perception of child poverty by Cameroonian people notwithstanding the classical approach of child poverty. Many studies don't take into account the heterogeneity of the studied population. This research work wants to have an edifying meaning in itself since the chosen group of families has some specific homogeneous criteria like for example, the context where these parents grew up, the similarities of their languages, and also a relative similar set of values, although the selection of the analysed families was done randomly. This research wants to capture the perception of child poverty in Cameroonian families living in Germany as viewed by themselves, and then confront this to the Capabilities of their children accordingly. This work aims at observing, interpreting, and comparing their life experiences to highlight one authentic "African" perception of child poverty and conceptualising the Capabilities of the African child in the European context.

This work has also been motivated by the desire to contribute to the theoretical debate on the assessment of child deprivation from one authentic African view. The main goal of the work is to fulfil a gap in scientific research on child poverty. Given that solutions to children welfare are only possible following every cultural background. The overarching goal is to improve suggestions towards Cameroonian children in Germany. That is the reason why this research will question Cameroonian families about their personal perception on child poverty with a particular focus on their culture through their languages to better understand the way they deal with their children's issues. The concept of child poverty seems not to be paramount in the African context as it is in the European context for instance. Referring to the "African" culture as a starting point in this work is an attempt to successfully explore some ways to understand child poverty in Cameroonian minds. This point is very important because it determines how parents behave and which kind of decisions they take when faced with issues concerning their children. It is important to note that these all can play a decisive role in the Capabilities of children.

The first step of this work is to understand how Cameroonian families perceive child poverty. This step has capital importance if the right way has to be found to fight it. In addition, a valuable way to eradicate child poverty in the long run, requires to have a

look in children's Capabilities. This research work is an investigation in the most accurate way on life experienced in Cameroonian families in the German context. The effort will aim at capturing the mechanism, the characteristics and the way this phenomenon is perceived by Cameroonian people living in a foreign setting. In other words: depending on the perception of child poverty, is there any difference in the way poverty affects Cameroonian children in Berlin?

#### i.b. Scientific contribution of the research

This research is scientific in nature and the approach used involves the areas of sociology and culture. This work is correspondingly multi-disciplinary. The Capability Approach combined to the African culture will be sustained in this work. It wants to be innovating to suggest a study about the perception of child poverty in African families in a European context. It will undoubtedly be very interesting to see in which extent specific contexts and living conditions can influence behaviours, reactions and attitudes in children issues. The objective here is to find out how Cameroonian households perceive child poverty in the German context. It will also be interesting to find out if this affects the Capabilities of children with Cameroonian background in Berlin. This research aims at showing which indicators of the child poverty phenomenon are considered as such in a Cameroonian household in Berlin. The perception of child poverty in Cameroonian families in the German context will help to better understand the perception of child poverty according to a particular cultural background. Furthermore, this research is an attempt to make the Capability Approach more operational in combining it to children's issues.

The research will confront the perception of child poverty by Cameroonian parents in Berlin in order to capture its dynamic in the Capabilities of the children. The German society is increasingly becoming multicultural (Berth 2012) and it is in its interest now to pay attention to children with migrant background growing and envisaging their future life in Germany. This is particularly important if the German society wants to keep the place of its development. Through the view of Cameroonian families in Berlin, this study will highlight how poverty can be experienced differently in the same context at a given time by people with a particular cultural background. This study strives to fill

a gap in the sociological research. Most of child poverty literature in social sciences does not focus on the perception of child poverty and its impact on Capabilities of children.

This research work restricts itself to interrogating a sample of four parents and four children from four different Cameroonian families living in Berlin to better establish the tie from the cultural background to the Capabilities of these children.

We expect this modest attempt to fill a gap in the scientific field as mentioned here above in presenting the perception of child poverty in Cameroonian households that can shapes the capabilities of their children. There is a lack of information concerning migrant children poverty in Germany and the findings of this research are very interesting to grasp the way a given group of migrant children living in Berlin deal with their Capabilities.

Berlin is a metropolitan city in Europe, and according to Beth, “Berlin is nicht Deutschland” (Berth 2012: pp.38). Since migrants are largely concentrated in Berlin in Germany, this was an interesting place to analyse migrant households. This research work commences with the observation phase through visiting the Cameroonian embassy in Berlin to get connected to Cameroonians families. Cameroonian families in Berlin were selected among those whose parents grew up in Africa, and have children growing up in Germany in a very different context. This research also aims to analyse how Cameroonian children experience their childhood in Berlin and if they are able to achieve their full potential in their future life which means their Capabilities in the German context.

Some studies on child poverty focussed on the capability approach have already been carried out. Adults’ failure, success or well-being should be found in the early age: “Understanding adults’ well-being might not be possible without reference to these early stages in life (children and adolescents)” (Biggeri & al. 2011: pp. 3).

The Capability Approach is the method chosen in this research to better evaluate how Cameroonians children in Berlin are able to fulfil the life they truly want to have. Although the Capability Approach applied to evaluate child poverty is relative, we can note that *a new horizon for the Capability Approach is therefore established when our main focus of analysis is children’s capabilities* (Biggeri & al. 2011: pp. 5). In fact the

Capability Approach as theorized by Sen was not explicitly dealing with children. The extension of this theory to children issues is an innovative initiative: “It seems that there is a room for further theorization of the Capability Approach by electing children as one of its objects of attention. In the same way, it appears that fresh light can be thrown on the promotion of public policies for children by using the approach” (Biggeri & al. 2011: pp. 4-5). In the same vein, using the Capability Approach to children issues may appear challenging. The challenge to extend this method and explore the many different aspects it can bear: “Indeed, although the Capability Approach is a normative framework that can be used to evaluate children’s issues, children’s issues may also challenge the capability framework itself and force us to revise it. This means, for instance, ceasing to regard children as irrational or immature, and instead considering them to be active actors, agents and subjects of Capabilities” (Biggeri & al. 2011: pp. 5). This research work wants to deal with the Capabilities of Cameroonian children in Berlin, *although the Capability Approach and human development research is often concerned with the deprivation of children’s capabilities and functionings, few studies have examined children’s capabilities* (Andresen & al. 2010: pp. 75). But some studies are already dealing with the issue of children capabilities.

The first studies based on the capability approach that tried to conceptualise children’s capabilities (Andresen & al. 2010) were done by: Biggeri, Libanora, Mariani & Menchini, 2004; Biggeri et al., 2006; Biggeri, 2007. These studies were on focus group discussions with children in Italy. A research group at Florence has also conducted studies and field research in Uganda: “The research in Uganda” represents one of the first attempts to use the capability Approach with children (aged 6-17 years) through a full set of participatory methods (Anich, 2006; Anich, Biggeri, Libanora, & Mariani, 2010; Biggeri & Anich, 2009). The aim of the research was to analyse the deprivation of capabilities among street children in Kampala, Uganda and the capabilities expansion (or reduction) of former street children participating in rehabilitation projects mainly run by local NGOs” (Andresen & al. 2010: pp.78). This empirical study focused on street children’s well-being in Kampala, by adopting a new method, chosen according to their age, for example drawings, mobility mapping, photo essays and life histories, collected through interviews between peer groups. As reference research in the same area, we have the study focused on street children in Mauritania carried out by Ballet,

and Radj (2004). This research, based mainly on interviews, revealed that *affective capital* (defined as the capability of being able to love and be loved by those who care for us) is central to a child's well-being (Andresen & al. 2010: pp.78). Moreover, Uyan-Semerci experienced a new idea with 101 children in Turkey in 2006: "101 children, 101 wishes". In this project he democratically adapts the participatory methods by operationalising the capability approach and examining the letters of children as a way of hearing their voice (Andresen 2010: pp. 78). For her, the task was hard, but interesting in an ethical and practical consequences view. In 2006 Comim leads a research project to evaluate the impact on children's capabilities of a programme that introduce music in Brazilian primary schools attended mostly by poor children (Andersen & al. 2010: pp. 78). Effect of this study was the belief that the objective measurement of capabilities remains an "illusive attempt". In the Master thesis of Blesone in 2008, we can find the application of the Capability Approach through some 'light' participatory methods in order to assess the impact of the 'Crescer e Viver' social project in the city of Rio de Janeiro in Brazil on *children participating in it by analysing data interviews and focus group discussions* (Andressen & al. 2010: pp. 79). Biggeri and Bonfanti try to understand in their research for the Bernard van Leer Foundation in 2009 the pertinence of the Capability Approach as an appropriate conceptual framework for young children as well, and *whether it could help to plan and evaluate early childhood service provisions*: "They provided a short introduction to different participatory methods used to evaluate services for children aged 4-7 years and then briefly presented the results of their explorative research in India (2008)...Although the authors admitted that it is too early to reach any specific conclusions, it is clear that the analysis of children's issues through the capability approach is theoretically very promising for policy design and, when combined with participatory methods, this can become a useful tool for practitioners" (Andresen & al. 2010: pp.80). Furthermore Kellock and Lawthom's apply the Capability Approach to investigate children's well-being by using photography in 2010. The point was to *underpin visual representation of functionings*: "Children age 8-10 years were invited to explore their own perspectives of well-being using photography as a vehicle for expression. Photography was selected as a research tool because it is a rich visual media for communicating ideas in qualitative studies and it enables children to communicate thoughts and feelings creatively. It is



also a useful participative method that does not depend on children's linguistic capabilities" (Andersen & al. 2010: pp. 79). Considering that, every region in the world can have its own way of perceiving life and, Camfield and Tafere in 2010 focus their attention on three Ethiopian communities using qualitative data from group interviews with children in the age of 11-13 years old, caregivers and community informants. It appears in this study that children and their local *caregivers each attribute a different meaning to the concept of a good life...furthermore*, Camfield's work explores *whether the Capability Approach can bridge the gap between shared local understandings of a good life and the universal prescriptions given by global bodies such UNICEF on what is 'good for children'* (Andersen & al. 2010: pp. 79). Focusing on street children, Serrokh concentrated in 2010 on microfinance by analysing "whether the provision of financial services is an appropriate tool for addressing their needs. Based on participatory research in Bangladesh...it argues that savings and credit products need to be designed and delivered in a very specific manner in order to enhance the benefits for these forgotten children" (Andersen & al. 2010: pp. 79-80). Another example can be taken from Horna Padrós and Ballet in 2010 in a study focused on child agency and identity formation in Peru: "Children are endowed with a capacity for agency even in situations in which they seem to be just the victims, and examines this capacity of children in a transitional situation on the streets of Peru. This study has identified children and adolescents who perform various activities on the streets or in the midst of traffic, and explores their impact on their capabilities" (Andersen & al. 2010: pp. 80).

In this continuity, the idea of analysing the Capabilities of children according to the perception of child poverty in Cameroonian households in Berlin is a complementary initiative to more operationalize the Capability Approach in children issues. Studies on poverty focus on migrant children in Germany are scarce: "Eine eigenständige Kinderarmutsforschung etablierte sich erst gegen Ende der 1990er- Jahre als Reaktion auf die festgestellte Infantilisierung der Armut mit einer Reihe von Konzepten, die Ausmaß, Erscheinungsformen und Ursachen von Kinderarmut behandelten. Diese Entwicklung begünstigte zwar einen Wandel des Problembewusstseins in der Öffentlichkeit, führte aber kaum dazu, dass Kinder mit Migrationshintergrund häufiger als eigenständige Untersuchungsgruppe berücksichtigt wurden...Nach wie vor existieren kaum Studien, welche Kinderarmutsrisiken differenziert für verschiedene

Herkunftsgruppen behandeln” (Butterwegge 2010: pp. 74). This research proposes an analysis on child poverty and Capabilities for a particular group of migrant in Germany, because the lack on research on migrant child poverty in Germany is a fact: “Migrationsspezifische Aspekte von Kinderarmut in Deutschland sind, obwohl Armutsstudien Kinder aus zugewanderten Familien inzwischen unisono als besonders von Armut betroffene Gruppe innerhalb der Minderjährigen kennzeichnen, weiterhin kaum erforscht, weil sich die Kinderarmutsforschung hierzulande weitgehend auf Erscheinungsformen bei *deutschen* Kindern konzentriert” (Butterwegge 2010: pp. 99).

Therefore, to fill this scientific “gap”, this research attempts to contribute in its way to meet a real need. This research will ponder over the perception of child poverty by Cameroonian families living in Berlin. The case study of Cameroonian people chosen for this research would particularly highlight how strong one cultural background can survive through generations in a foreign context. For instance the Cameroonian background of the interviewee in this research plays a very central role in how they perceive child poverty, and how they deal with in the German context. The outcome is expected to be very interesting. It will proceed through observation, interviews, interpretation of the life experience of Cameroonians in Berlin and the future life expectations of their children in Germany according to the Capability Approach. It is important to specify that, Capabilities refer to individuals’ opportunities as well as their capacities. The core focus in the capability approach by Amartya Sen is on what individuals are able to do. For instance it is a matter of finding out which impact the perception of child poverty of Cameroonian households in Berlin has on the Capabilities of their children in the German setting.

### i.c. Research problem and questioning

Through the methods of observations and interviews with four parents and their children (aged 11-16 years) in four different Cameroonian families in Berlin, this study will attempt to reconstruct and interpret the perception of child poverty within the selected families in the German context by confronting their perception of child poverty to the Capability Approach in such setting. Through the interviews with Cameroonian families this research work will try to find out on their perception on child poverty. The

main point is to present the view of child poverty in Cameroonian households in Berlin, and to analyse the extend of its impacts on the Capabilities of their children. At the end of the study, it is expected that a link will be established to explain the importance of child poverty perception and its impact on the Capabilities of children. This research proceeds on the assumption that the cultural background, based on languages of Cameroonian families independently of the context they live in, can also determine their perception of child poverty. Since the most important aspect of this work is the Cameroonian culture applied to the Capabilities of children with Cameroonian background in Berlin, this work intents to answer to the research questions outlined below:

- How do Cameroonian people in Berlin perceive child poverty?  
Which role does their cultural background play on their perception of child poverty?
- Does this perception of child poverty impact on the Capabilities of their children in Berlin?  
What are the future life opportunities of children with Cameroonian background in Berlin?

This entire set of questions is very important and must be analysed to better understand Cameroonian people in the Germany.

Cameroonian migration to Germany is recent enough, and most of these migrants envisage settling in Germany as one Cameroonian father stated in his interview that returning to his home country is not a relevant issue for him since he had wife and children in Germany and he decided to settle there.

For this reason, it is important to understand the cultural background of Cameroonian people, to find out how their children might better deal with their Capabilities in Germany. They are part of the German society and probably need to feel as such to give the best of themselves investing to see Germany move forward.

#### i.d. Structure of this research

Since results of this research presented that there is no way to combine children with the poverty concept in some Cameroonian cultures first based on their languages, it turns out that according to their cultural background, a “poor child” in Cameroonian households in Berlin is a single child or a child in very small families according to their scale of values. Having this particular cultural background in Berlin, children from Cameroonian households developed particular skills from themselves, the so called hybrid identity, what makes them better improve both socially and personally in Germany as compared to their parents.

Therefore, the structure of this research is broken down into 5 chapters to better present its results. First chapter will introduce the research in presenting the notions of child poverty and the Capability Approach as such, before presenting children as active actors in improvement of their own capabilities. Then second chapter will draw up the profile of children at risk of poverty in Germany before presenting in chapter three the specific picture of Cameroonian households in general. Chapter four targets the method used to collect, to analyse and to interpret data in this research. Finally chapter will deliver the research findings and analysis of interviews with four Cameroonian households representing the sample taken for this research work.

### 1. Child poverty and the Capability Approach

This Chapter introduces the research on child poverty and children’s capabilities. It is all about children, for they are the subject of this work and it seems necessary to thoroughly revisit the child concept (1.1). The second step is an attempt to describe how children experience poverty (1.2). The third point will move on to show the link connecting child poverty to the Capability Approach (1.3). And finally, the research work will present the correlation between children’s rights and the Capabilities (1.4).

#### 1. 1. The child concept

According to the convention on the Rights of the Child, a child is mainly conceived as every human being below the age of eighteen (18) years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier (CRC 1989, Art. 49). The African Charter on the

Rights and Welfare of the Child under the umbrella of the African Union (AU) also defines a child as “every human being below the age of 18 years” (ACRWC 1990, Art. 82). Therefore in this research, the concept of “child” shall be understood as a human being under the age of 18. This definition is also valid in Germany (a member-state of the convention of the Rights of the Child), and the chosen sampling families live in Germany.

Furthermore the concept of childhood needs to be defined. According to Scott (2006: p.23), the French historian Philip Ariès argued in 1962 that it was only in the sixteenth century that a *distinct gap has emerged between adulthood and childhood*. The concept of childhood is widely accepted as first elaborated at the beginning of the modern age. But the childhood concept is a historical construction that depends on the way children are treated in the society (Biggeri M., Ballet J. & Comim F, 2011). For example, *traditionally, developmental psychologists have viewed children as human becoming* (Scott 2006: 24). This implies that children are not completed human beings. They are in the process of becoming full human beings. Childhood is biologically the period between birth and puberty before a human being is considered as adult or of full age. The Longman dictionary (1987) defined the child as young human being of either sex, from before birth to the completion of physical development. We can also say that a child is a minor individual who is not yet an adult, because of not reaching the legal majority. This early stage of a human existence is the childhood. Childhood determines the state or time of being a child, this means the period from birth to adolescence (Mc Millan Dictionary, 1981). Childhood constitutes some developmental stages of childhood until a human being is considered as an *adult*. The childhood begins with the early childhood or the so call ‘play age’ where a child begins speaking and taking steps independently (until about 8 years). In many original African communities, childhood is the time in when a child is pampered by all members of the community to live in society. The child is allowed at this stage to do whatever he wants without being scolded because he is supposed not to know *the rules of life in society*. This is a kind of discovery phase and almost everything *is* permitted to small children.

The second stage of childhood is the middle childhood that is the ‘school age’ or the training age (From 8 years old to puberty). After having understood how the life in the community should be, a child must learn how to behave in the society. This learning age

is a preparation to the adult life. Children in the original African context are encouraged in this phase to observe carefully and understand the adults and their way of life. In this period of time, they learn for example how to respect older people, or how to share with other people in the community. A child is at this stage not allowed to behave like a 'small child' anymore. Mistakes are reprimanded and the child begins to adjust his character to the community. All adults in the community have the right to reprimand any children as biological parents would do. This phase better shows the action of children as *active agents* (Biggeri & all. 2011, pp 28) in the society. This view is the fact that children participate by playing an active role in the life of their family; in the community or in the society in which they live.

The third stage of the childhood is the adolescence or the onset of puberty and from there to the post puberty period. That is the starting point of adult life for a child. After that, teenagers are normally considered as full age that is the beginning of the adult life: 'a human being live'. Many original African communities mark this stage with initiation rites like for example the circumcision of boys in Cameroon, Togo, Nigeria, Ghana, Benin, Gambia, Senegal, Guinea and in many other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. Normally the stage of adolescence is not really defined in the Cameroonian conception because young people change from child to adult and there is no age limit that marks the childhood phases. Since the concept of youth was created by the society "Jugend ist eine gesellschaftliche Erfindung des Industriezeitalters" (Krüger 1993:335), childhood takes a particular meaning depending on the society, but in African communities, there are many similarities in this issue.

The former Organization of the African Unity (OAU), presently the African Union (AU), signed the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (the ACRWC) in 1990. The ACRWC is the first main instrument that specifically insures rights and welfare to African children. The African Charter mentions in the Article 2 that *a child means every human being below the age of 18 years*. But we note that some African communities like the Madingue an ethnical group in Gambia considers that the concept of *child* includes foetus, unborn and living children. The reason is that, unborn, living and dead persons all make the world, they all belong to the Madingue family. This means that the Mandingue people consider that the children to born in their community are already family members.

It is important for us to pay attention to the title of this Charta: *The African Charter of the Rights and Welfare of the Child*. When the former OAU decided to call this declaration *the African Charter*, the reason might have been that it is admitted that all African cultures have similarities or have the same foundation (Joseph Ki- Zerbo, 1964). In other words we can say that Black Africans have the same original culture but it is practised in different ways. For this reason, the former OAU decided in 1999 to elaborate a common charter for all African children because of their cultural similarities. Thus we can talk of African culture to design all Black African traditions together. The ACRWC is about *Rights and Welfare* of African children. The idea of the right of the African child is inspired from the African Charter on Human and People's Rights and from the Universal declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations (UN). The Welfare on the other hand has a direct connection with the so call *African solidarity*. It is about minimum wellbeing and social support in the African way for all African children. The point is that an African child is not only the child of its parents but also the child of every adult in the community. It entails that if biological parents are not able to insure welfare to their children, relatives or any other adults will be able to do that in the same way for any child in the community. It is not conceivable to find children without 'parents'. From an outsider perspective, all Black Africans are relatives. This solidarity chain about African children is a particular point in the original African context that makes it peculiar. Cameroonian families try to perpetuate this network formula in Berlin. Black African orphan children are not considered as abandoned children. They almost do not notice that their biological parents are missing in many cases because adult relatives always take care of them just like their own children. The reason is that every adult is supposed to be a parent for every child, orphan or not. The childhood is as much important as a sensitive phase in life:

“Kindheit ist eine spezifische und vielleicht die bedeutendste Entwicklungsphase im Leben eines Menschen” (Butterwegge 2000: pp. 272).

One standard definition of child was formulated by the United Nations convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989) that deals with specific children's needs and rights. The Convention defines the child (chapter 1) as *every human being below the age of eighteen years unless the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier*. According

to this viewpoint, childhood can merely be taken into account if it is contextualized in a specific culture and social structure. But in this work the concept of child will refer to a human being under the 'biological age' (Scott 2006: p.24) of 18 years old.

## 1. 2. What is poverty for children?

This research work analyses some Cameroonian families living in Berlin from the inside to capture their perception of poverty and then assess its impacts on the Capabilities of their children. The quotations above are from the children with the Cameroonian background inquiry in 2013 in Berlin for this research. These children were between 11 to 16 years old at the time of the inquiries. In the above sequences, they give their own definitions of poverty or child poverty.

Child poverty is not fatal but it can be recidivist and last phase of childhood is the most important period for the coming adult to avoid poverty in future. The methodology to detect poverty is one of the key points to analyse child poverty. Indicators needed for one to survive and be happy can quite be different from one individual to another. Among other aspects to poverty as the children with Cameroonian background in Berlin say in the interviews, we can note for example lack of food, medical care, drinking water, education, not having siblings, leisure time, housing and clothing. But the measurement of poverty can be controversial, because notions like 'being comfortable' may mean something different from child to child. Even a small change of the poverty line can have a major influence in the statistics and its interpretation (Paugam S.: 2005). But poverty among children is directly linked with that of households:

“Children can be said to be in poverty when their standard of living is unacceptably low and this is because of insufficient resources in the households in which they live” (Minujin and Nandy 2012: pp. 136).

Poverty is a complex concept and it can cover different realities in different contexts. Danziger wrote in 1992 that, “the measurement of poverty in rich nations involves the comparison of some index of household well-being or economic resources with household needs. When command over economic resources falls short of needs, a



household (or person or family) is classified as poor” (Danziger & Haveman 2001: pp. 28). On the other hand, the World Bank uses poverty measures of \$1 to \$2 per person per day in the developing nations of Africa or Latin America as the standard; such that when a family has less than US \$2 at its disposal per day on average, this family is considered poor. These two definitions of poverty are deficient in several ways since they assume that poverty can be measured as either poor and or non-poor. Some researches have shown that poverty can be categorized as extremely or relative. These two notions are supposed to be complementary. On the one hand, the measure of absolute poverty is likely to be used as the standard in poor countries, as an important part of the population lives on minimal threshold of survival especially where food is concerned. On the other hand in developed countries poverty may not be measured using the power to get food as a yard stick since food is almost assured for the whole population, thus poverty may be defined by comparing one individual to the next (Cogneau et al. 1996).

A policy brief by the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development, (OECD) contends that absolute poverty thresholds consider people to be living in poverty once their income is not enough to cover the cost of a given basket of goods in a particular year and that relative poverty measures indicate how far individuals and families are deprived of the goods and services that are customary in a given society (OECD 2005). However in this study, both set perceptions of child poverty will be confronted in Cameroonian households in Berlin: the parent’s perception of child poverty, and the children’s own.

Furthermore child poverty undermines the rights of children to an acceptable standard of living as much as acceptable standards of living differ from country to country (Nolan & al. 2006). Poverty is a multidimensional phenomenon and less amenable to simple solutions (Haughton & Khandker 2009: pp.3) even for children in a household, poverty can be experienced differently. The first idea of poverty primarily reflects to money. Those who lack the minimum of necessary financial means to live adequately with their children in a household are by definition poor. But the *minimum need* of people to live adequately may appear to be controversial.

This research will therefore consider the relative definition of poverty which links some aspects in family life. It will consider the conception of child poverty by examining

some parameters in relation with the perception of poverty by Cameroonian parents and that of their children. Bertram & Kohl's definition of poverty focus on material wellbeing, health, education, and the link between children and parents (Bertram & Kohl 2010). But in Cameroonian circles, the closer the solidarity between people, the less they perceive their own poverty as a failure (Integrated Poverty by Georg Simmel), and this fact might influence the Capabilities of their children in Berlin.

Technically child poverty is poverty observed among children, which means poverty of human beings under the age 18 years. But practically, child poverty usually refers to the poverty of households in which children have to grow up in. However, the concept of poverty should first be defined as such, before finding out what it means to children. It is important to keep in mind the complexity of the poverty concept through its relativity:

“Armut gehört zu den Begriffen, die zwar fest im Alltagsbewusstsein verankert sind, unter denen aber jede/r etwas anderes versteht” (Butterwegge 2000: pp.21).

Through this assertion, it appears difficult to give a unique and definite definition of the poverty concept. Many scientific researches had dealt with poverty, trying to better capture this reality, but the fact is that the poverty reality has many faces. We can say for example that poverty is in its general form a relative or an absolute deprivation. This deprivation may have a direct tie with frustrations that make people sad for a precise time or for a long run in their live. Thus this deprivation can be something that we have lost or anything else that we need to have in our life to feel fulfilled. This can determine how happy we are or not in a particular time, depending on our aspirations. The Oxford dictionary (2012) defines poverty as the state of being *extremely poor*, like thousands of families living in abject poverty. And being poor is lacking sufficient money to live at a standard considered comfortable or ‘normal’ in a society. This *normality* takes a particular meaning, depending on every society and for each person, and at different ages. For the Longman dictionary previously (1987), poverty is to live below the poverty line, which means *having very little money and therefore a low standard of living*. It means by low standard of living the opportunity to get some accommodation facilities, like sanitation, comfortable home, or access to medicine or education.

Otherwise, People who are considered poor are not a fixed and homogeneous group that shares a common outlook. To understand poverty, deprivation in a given society should first be determined. We note that deprivation can be either emotional or material. According to Townsend (1970), the deprivation is the effect of the maldistribution of resources in a society. This can be seen as a description of material deprivation, because it presents the external reality of the individual. But material deprivations cannot exist without financial considerations. From this view point, poor people are those with less money or such privileges, and the rich ones will represent those with much more financial resources. It appears very simple to classify households as poor or rich according to the monetary perception. But sometimes it is confusing to identify the poverty or wealth reality from signs, since income and money are just external and visible signs, they are not misleading, but they can spell confusion (Labbens J.: 1978).

Although the lack of money sounds the first alarm of poverty, a poor households is more than a mere lack of money. We can place the definition of poverty between this:

“...The 1990 report (World Development Reports) viewed poverty primarily in monetary terms, the 2001 report saw poverty as multifaceted deprivation not only of income but of the capabilities to achieve full human potential. Poverty from this perspective is not merely a matter of reduced income or consumption, but amounts to a state of relative powerlessness and exclusion from decision-making processes” (Hulme and Toye 2007: pp. 27)

To consider a child as poor, we need to see beyond the income of the household he lives in. The UN for instance defines poverty as a *denial of choices and opportunities, a violation of a human dignity, and a lack of capacity to participate effectively in a society*. There is ‘definitively no’ correct single conception or measurement of poverty (Wisor 2012: pp. 40) and nowadays it become more plain that poverty affects in different ways individuals, social groups or different regions in the same country and all over the world. According to this, the first principle to keep in mind is that the notion of poverty is basically relative and not absolute. Relativity indirectly means the individual’s perception of poverty differs from one another. Some scholars think that the rich and the poor are directly connected because wealth creates poverty (Sismondi).

The point is that every *poor* person is considered to be poor in comparison with a *rich* one, and rich people are considered so in comparison with the needy. But for Townsend (1970: p.46), *Poverty may be regarded as subsistence, inequality or externality*. Subsistence is about the minimum provision needed to maintain health and working capacity. It involves the capacity to survive and to maintain physical efficiency. Inequality refers to the relative position of income groups to each other. Externality has to do with the social consequences of poverty for the rest of the society rather than in terms of the needs of the poor. Poverty often concerns adults and we need to examine how children feel in such poor households because: “There seems to be a popular belief that living in poverty is associated with worse outcomes for children” (Phipps & Curtis 2000: pp.1).

Through this, it can be said that children growing up in poor households are poor: “Children’s economic status is embedded in a family context” (Maholmes and King 2012: pp.54). The extreme penury line of poverty for example is first manifested by the lack of food for children in a household. The subsistence-level definition of poverty is arbitrary and relative. Technically it is about the daily needs on calories for a minimum living survival. This kind of poverty can be chronic. Most of Cameroonian parents in Berlin grew up in the Sub-Saharan context in Africa where extreme penury line of poverty persists. About one quarter of those who suffer from chronic poverty in the world, live in Sub-Saharan Africa (D’Agostino 2008). Extreme poor means people that are constantly poor during many successive years or those who are almost always poor through generations. This is the so-called vicious circle of poverty. The fact is that people starve out because they lack money, whereas they do not have the opportunity to work to get this money over generations. By taking the example of food, as children with Cameroonian background in Berlin do, it appears that poor families lack the minimum means to satisfy their survival needs, and have difficulties getting enough food every day. That led to malnutrition or undernourishment of children. The deficit or lack of food is important because well-fed people have strong physical condition, they are supposed to be better resistant to disease and they normally have better mental health, and their children can grow up in better physical conditions. Thus we can consider that having enough food per day provides good capacities for work and enhances the income. However as some people assert, the relation between malnutrition

and income is not always direct (Dieterlen 2005: pp. 25). Consumption shows the preferences of individuals and the nutritional input necessary for a human body determines the deprivation state of someone. Children over 11 years need 2.750 calories a day (Townsend 1970 : pp 70 ). Then we have the idea that the poverty gap is:

“...to sum over each poor person the gap between the poverty level and his income, and then express the sum as a percentage of the total income (...) of the population. (...) The poverty gap is the minimum amount of additional income expressed as a percentage of society’s aggregate income, which, if it is obtained by the poor, can eliminate poverty” (Dasgupta 1993 : pp. 78-79, pp. 356-359).

The earning of some poor people in a society can be so far removed from the rest of others people that an ‘acceptable’ way of life in a society cannot be possible for them and their children. The poverty gap reflects the intensity of poverty within a society. Then the poverty gap index gives an estimate of how poverty is eating in the society by making an estimation of how far the poor are from the chosen poverty line. The general meaning of poverty line taken is a level of income set 60% of the median household income per month. The disparity of different social classes is a direct effect of inequality. Inequality is a distribution failure of economic assets in a society. This maldistribution of resources in a society has a direct tie with the labour market. In Germany many jobless people live on social transfers to help them maintain some dignity:

“Sie (die sozialhilfe) hatte das Ziel, als ‘Hilfe in besondere Lebenslagen’ jedem Menschen auch in Krisenzeiten einen Rechtsanspruch auf ein menschenwürdiges Leben zu sichern” (Palentien 2004: pp. 25).

One extreme case of poverty in Germany is the case of homeless people since: “In Abgrenzung zu Hunger und Obdachlosigkeit in anderen Ländern werden heute in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland diejenigen Personen oder Haushalte als arm bezeichnet, die über nur so geringe materielle, kulturelle und soziale Mittel verfügen, dass sie von derjenigen Lebensweise ausgeschlossen sind, die in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland als unterste Grenze des Akzeptablen angenommen wird” (Palentien 2004: pp.65).

Being homeless can be assimilated in extreme cases to poverty in Germany because it has an impact on all aspects of one's life. Homeless people cannot have a normal social life with children; they cannot invite friends because they don't have a shelter or a roof and they might feel ashamed such that they exclude themselves from their social circle, or their friends reject them; they are definitely deemed to be socially unable:

“Armut ist als eine Situation (Lage) zu verstehen, in der Personen, Familien und Gruppen über so geringe (materielle, kulturelle und soziale) Mittel verfügen, dass sie von der Lebensweise einer Gesellschaft ausgeschlossen sind” (Lutz 2011: pp.9)

UNICEF defined child poverty in 2010 as human being under the age eighteen years old, who experiences *deprivation of material, spiritual* as well as *emotional resources* in life to survive develop and thrive that make them *unable to enjoy* their rights, to achieve their *full potential* or to participate fully and equally as member in society. The experience of poverty for children surpasses all statistical or theoretical considerations. Living in poverty for a child is a personal painful and degrading experience in the young age, where feelings, attitudes and the perception of the world can radically change. There is neither only one type of poverty for children, nor a standard way to perceive it. Thus the fact that child poverty is relative issue, and its meaning depends on how the society considers it (Paugan: 2005). Wealth is not sufficient in classifying a human being, neither now and nor ever before. However, today poverty downgrades human beings as never before (Mauras C., 2002). We think that the response to the issue of poverty can be simplified as such: given that the common element to every person is human dignity, we design people, including children, exempt from human dignity in their way to live as poor (Maimon 1190).

### 1. 2. 1. The relativity of poverty

Not being able to satisfy one's basic needs characterizes absolute poverty. This means the life in which one lacks minimum income required to maintain average standard of living in the society he lives in. This rudimentary explanation is controversial nowadays

but it has inspired some works such the evaluation of poverty by the ‘minimal subsistence level’. Poor people are then classified into two groups: the primary poor because they are missing basic needs and the secondary poor because of mismanagement of household incomes (S. Rowntree: 1901). Children are particularly suffering in both cases. Seebohm Rowntree identified unemployment and low wage as both categories and causes of relative poverty. The ‘primary’ poor are families whose total earning is insufficient to obtain minimum necessities to merely stay alive. The ‘secondary’ poor are people whose total earning is supposed to be enough to cover basic needs if part of earning is not absorbed by other expenditure needs, be it useful or wasteful. The example was taken in York in the United Kingdom: the necessary budget should covers basic needs of households like food, clothes and accommodations. A lot of poor people move in and out from the first to the second step of poverty during all their live and we can say that for them poverty state does not change over time. According to this fact, many children grew up in a necessitous environment and mostly do not have the chance to come out of poverty in their future lives, thus it appears from outside that poverty is transmitted like inheritance from generations to generations. Regions with high percentage of extreme poor people were qualified as third world (Sauvy 1952) or fourth world (Wresinski 1969). The World Bank adopted the absolute perspective of poverty by defining minimum income of a person. The subsistence level is based on some needs and services in life. But many countries draw up a social welfare system from the basic welfare benefits. Therefore the absolute approach of poverty enables to target more effectively the very poor to better help them through social policies. But the most limited conception of absolute poverty is the definition of basic needs that seems to be universal. What we talk about necessarily depends on the time and the context. Furthermore, in a society, basic needs at a specific period are not the same for all people. Which made it urgent to put the absolute poverty concept in perspective.

The relative perception of poverty target a particular group of people in society:

“...Als relative Armut werden Mangelzustände bezeichnet, die sich am allgemeinen bzw. Durchschnittlichen Lebensstandard einer festgelegten Population orientiert” (Palentien 2004: pp.62).

Cause of relative poverty include unemployment, education level, poor health or no access to health care and no access to affordable services. Therefore, the main point in that relative conception of poverty is the determination of the average income of a household. The relative poverty should contextually be the economic inequality in a specific context in people's life. In this case, poor people are considered as those who have less than the median income in a given society. This means that being poor is, not meeting the necessary needs to live 'normally' in a given society. According to this, poverty issues can derive from the redistribution of goods in a society or injustice: where the poor are those who are more discriminated by the maldistribution of resources in the society. But a poor and economically egalitarian society will be condemned to *perpetual poverty* (Labbens 1978). The relativity of the poverty concept also depends on the subjective approach like was developed in the 1960s by Bernard M. S. Van Praag (1968). It means taking into account not only the judgement of experts but also the opinion of the poor persons concerned to better capture their daily challenges. Personal experiences of people considered as poor highlight that poverty is a plural phenomenon. In fact, the multidimensional aspect of poverty includes personal and social dimension of expectations by the people themselves. The multidimensional approach expresses the deprivation of the poor which means more than the mere lack of money. For children, many different aspects of life such as isolation, lack of voice, humiliation, respect and self-esteem can be taken into account (UK Coalition Against Poverty 1997). Many factors interact with each other and make poverty a cross-cutting phenomenon like the level of education, high vulnerability (disease, unemployment, break-up of the family unit), marginal chances of social advancement, permanent pressure due to deficit of basic needs, to make one self-heard by public authorities, the contempt, lack of interest and condescension from others in the society (D'Agostino & Duvert: 2008). Children from marginalised parents in the society are considered as being poor because, if parents do not feel like belonging to the society, it is difficult for them to help their children share that social link.

The social policy of the European Union deals intensively with child poverty issues. The European Council explicitly engaged its member- states in 2006 to 'take necessary measures to rapidly and significantly reduce child poverty, giving all children equal



opportunities regardless of their social background'. Children in the EU represent the future of the Union and represent a very important potential for tomorrow. All children who grow up in the EU are not European citizens, but there is unfortunately no explicit mention or discussion of poverty among immigrant children in *any of the EU documents* (Bhalla & McCormick 2009: pp.45). The EU considers that children are at very great risk of poverty than the rest of the population in the EU. In 2006, 19% of children were at risk of poverty, against 16% for the total population (EU Joint Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion 2008), and in the same year, the risk of child poverty in Germany was 12%. The EU approach of child poverty is a relative one. Relative poverty is based on living standards, which means the income level of the rest of the society. This implies that poor families lack access to many of the goods and services expected in developed societies. One result of this is the exclusion and loss of human dignity in the society, which result in relative poverty. The relative concept of poverty is close to the social inequality. The EU considers poverty line in European countries on 60% of the net household median income of the country. Children from families with income less than the 60% of the median income, are considered to be poor. Children at risk of poverty in the EU are classified in three categories: Children living in 'jobless households', those in households confronted with 'in-work poverty' and the ones living with 'social transfers'. This approach based on the relative perception of child poverty is also applied in Germany, which is the most developed country within the EU. The European Commission considered in 2008 that the children at risk of poverty in Germany represent children living in low-income families; this undermines incomes below 60 per cent of the median wage, which is a material conception of poverty.

### 1. 2. 2. The material dimension of poverty

Poverty is usually a monetary issue and the World Bank (2005) defines absolute poverty as US \$1.08 a day on a purchasing power parity basis in all countries. This poverty line threshold of US \$1.08 is controversial because each nation has a different reality. For example in 2010, the absolute poverty line in US Dollar was, \$15.15 in the United Nations, \$1.0 in India, in China \$0.55, and in Cameroon 1,1267€ (≈\$1,28) per day (World Bank 2012). The correlation is commonly made between basic needs and

financial means, like food, water, health, shelter, education and clothing. Lack of money deprives some people of these basic human needs. This is a state of destitution or an “absolute poverty”. Although poverty is frequently seen as lack of money the destitution of poor people cannot only be restricted to low incomes:

“Armut ist mehr, als wenig Geld zu haben. Sie beraubt Menschen ihrer materiellen Unabhängigkeit und damit der Freiheit, selbst über ihr Schicksal zu entscheiden” (Butterwegge 2000: pp. 22).

According to Butterwegge, poverty steals to humans their material independence and deprives them the freedom to decide their own destiny. When poverty is considered only through income or resources issues, its understanding will be very limited. Poverty can generally be defined as a permanent vulnerable state in which needs are not sufficiently satisfied to allow to a family life with dignity in a particular society. This common definition has to be further clarified. What is the need for this? What is meant by sufficiently satisfied in a specific context? There is no single ‘perfect’ definition of poverty: *All indicators are imperfect but some are more imperfect than others. The poverty indicator based on the US \$1.25/ day poverty line is particularly problematic* (Minujin and Nandy 2012: pp. 39). To lack financial means or not also influences the Capability Approach used in this research, because *in poverty measurement, the capabilities approach is frequently contrasted with uni-dimensional income or consumption-expenditure measures* (Wisor 2012: pp. 92).

In research Cameroonian families belong to strong African social networks and connections with other African families in Berlin. They support each other with money and supplies. This makes the financial poverty approach difficult to detect and makes the financial approach limited and ineffective to better portray the perception of child poverty of Cameroonian households in Berlin. But in some cases: *some people may be exceptionally good managers of their limited resources, and succeed in obtaining essentials even where most people on that income would not be able to do so* (Nolan and Whelan 2011: pp. 100).

The non-monetary deprivation is mostly used in analysing poverty in Europe although measuring financial resources remains central. The income parameter gives reliable information about material deprivation that helps to capture poverty and social

exclusion. The non-monetary indicators should help understanding the experience of poverty as a whole. The deprivation criteria can be for example education, housing situation, health care and the subjective wellbeing like being happy with one's own life and for how long.

### 1. 3. Child poverty and the Capability Approach

#### 1. 3. 1. Children and the Capability Approach

The Capability Approach (CA) is a theoretical framework conceived from 1979 by Amartya Sen. This approach makes it possible to analyse the capacities of people to be free to choose and to have the life they have reasons to value (Flavio, Mozaffar & Alkire 2008). The Capability Approach aims on what individuals are really able to do or to be. It targets wellbeing in given societies with different characteristics and not only with the income as one dimension scale like it used to be. Although material goods can be important means to achieve capabilities, they are not at all considered as an end in itself by Sen. At first, this approach looks for answers to what a human being needs for a good and successful life. It is more about requested human capacities on being happy in life. Sen first focus on five components to assess the capability: the very importance of real freedom in decision making, individual difference on be able to transform resources into valuable activities, multi-variate nature of activities that give rise to happiness, balance of non- and materialistic factors in evaluating human welfare, and concern for the distribution of opportunities in a given society (Sen 1992). The Capability Approach was able to present inequality and multi-dimensional poverty according to various influencing factors to a better life in society. Capabilities include two parts: functioning and opportunity freedom. They can be seen as people's opportunity and ability to generate outcomes, considering individual characteristics and external factors. The capabilities are related to life standard and to human rights since they should contribute to develop better life for all in a given society. Therefore the Capability Approach gave the foundation on social justice theories and development ethics (Deneulin & Shahani 2012) for Human Development Index and for Human

Poverty Index to world development reports since 1990. And this approach is particularly applied in development and social justice areas.

The Capability Approach by Sen consists on both: the Capability and the functioning. A Capability represents a sum of functionings in a human life (Sen 1992: pp.40); and functionings in the most basic sense are the different things that can value a human life on *being* and *doing* (Sen 1999: pp.75). It resulted that living can be seen as set of interrelated functionings what are all states and activities of human beings. Functionings vary from elementary things (being well-nourished, be healthy, being educated, having clothes, being safe, being housed in a pleasant warm house or having good job) to very complex ones (being happy, having self-respect, having good life, or participating in social life without shame). According to this we can note that many features of people referred to *being* or to *doing*. Functionings are the subjects of capabilities referring to what people are capable, what people want to be capable, and what people should be capable to be and/or to do. So that functionings are inherently tied to capabilities. Furthermore, capabilities are functionings that are feasible for a person to achieve.

Freedom is one most important foundation of the Capability Approach. It is about the chance to be free to realise the life people really value. Freedom is an intrinsic value that allows people to be independent in life. Concept of freedom is a goal as such and includes the passive freedom which means the absence of obstacles, and the active freedom which is the chance to act by oneself. We can note among different freedoms, political freedoms (with right to critics, right of opposition or the right to vote), economical institutions (availability of resources, exchange conditions, or distribution of resources in society), social chances (chance to be educated, access to health care), guaranty to transparency (press freedom, or obligation to provide information), and social security (social insurance, social transfers, or minimum wage) (Sen 1992). Any society can be so much fair just in terms of capabilities for most people in this society.

In addition, for Sen the notion of *Agency* depend on ability to personally value and choose functionings that may not lead to personal well-being. According to Sen, an agent is someone who acts and bring about change, whose achievement are able to be valuated to be her/his own values or goals.

At this stage, we can take the example of the Capability of children with Cameroonian background in Berlin to speak fluent German. To achieve this Capability, they need

some functionings that enable them to achieve linguistic proficiency. Some examples of Functionings in such case are: practising German at home in the family, having many friends for more practice, visiting a school for a better mastery of grammar, or practising the language through doing lots of exercises. The fact that the four children interviewed in this research feel more comfortable when speaking German than in any other language situation shows that they have this Capability. It seems like children with Cameroonian background in Berlin have the Capability to master the German language as native speakers do and the Cameroonian children interviewed in this research work said that they feel more German through having a good command of German language.

Capability includes the freedom to make choices and take decisions without constraint for own life. Children in Cameroonian households in Berlin freely make the decision to work and improve on their language skills to better fit in the German society; this is called integrative motivation in sociolinguistics. Although “the problems that arises when applying the CA to empirical research are mostly regarded as mater of operationalization” (Otto & Schäfer 2014), we can note that children’s capabilities are their capacity to make choices free of constraints and fully assume them. As it is recognised by Biggeri:

“But this idea, that children’s capabilities are an important way of assessing their welfare and lifetime well-being, remains relatively unexplored in the literature” (Biggeri & al. 2011: pp. xi),

This research deals with an unexplored aspect of the Capability Approach in applying it on children in Cameroonian households in Berlin according to the perception of child poverty in their cultural background. Cameroonian Parents as well as their children were interviewed in this study to get a satisfactory material to analyse these children’s Capabilities. All was geared at finding out which Capabilities of similar children in future life in Germany.

The Capability Approach is “an alternative and a more relevant route on describing the well-being and human development, in the ‘Capabilities Approach’ developed by Amartya Sen (see, for instance, Sen, 1985) drawing on early works by John Stuart Mill, Adam Smith and even Aristotle” (Biggeri & al. 2011: pp. xi). The Capability Approach

is a very interesting theory in this research to analyse how children in Cameroonians households can realize their full potential in Germany, and if they can freely choose the life they really want to have and standards they really value since:

“The idea of capabilities is particularly relevant when evaluating the lives and well-being of children. What happens if childhood is intrinsically related to the capabilities with which an adult ends up? Adult skills and talents depend critically on childhood learning and experience” (Biggeri & al. 2011: pp. xi).

The Capability theory can also help understanding Cameroonian parents in Berlin, by analysing the way they perceive child poverty, and how they provide guidance to their children in the German context through such perception. It is important to know if this has an impact on future life of their children. The experience of Cameroonian children in their family in Berlin can determine their social life in future:

“It is during the early years of life that individuals experience the most important cognitive and emotional developments that subsequently shape their identity and world-views. The capabilities of children and adolescents are formed through social interaction and receptiveness within the household and broader environments, and constitute to a large extent the foundation of a human being’s development” (Biggeri & al. 2011: pp. 3).

Childhood is a sensitive phase of life and parents ought to play the most important role at that stage. Though children are expected to reflect the education given by their parents, the feeling and the future expectations of children can be very different from those of their parents:

“...The Capability Approach to children, do not just affirm that children are the subjects of capabilities but that they may have different capabilities than adults and/or that they can give different degrees of relevance to the same capability...The capabilities should not be viewed within a static (as they usually are) but within a dynamic framework” (Andresen 2010: pp. 82).

In the studied cases, it is interesting to get opinions of Cameroonian parents relating to their life in Germany.

According to the interviews with Cameroonian parents and with their children made for this study, it can be said here that Cameroonian parents have a very different life experience in Berlin compared to that of their own children. So life in Germany is experienced in differently way by children and by parents in Cameroonian households in Berlin. An interesting point would be to know if this difference will definitely impact on the future Capabilities of these children in their future life in Germany. It makes sense to find out what Cameroonian children expect from their future lives in Germany and how much their parents can influence on it. For example through involvement in the German social life, because:

“...The Capability Approach can be operationalised with different methods...In the case of children, it is worth distinguishing between participatory and non-participatory method” (Andresen & al. 2010: pp. 75).

Since the non-participatory methods are mainly meant for quantitative studies, this research is the result of qualitative surveys, and will only focus on the participatory methods. Capabilities are both opportunities and the capacities of individuals. Experience and what happens in childhood and adolescence is essentially related to the capabilities with which an adult ends up. It is during the early years of life that emotional developments and personal sensitivity shape the identity and orient the world-view. As Schütz and Luckmann stated:

“Jeder Schritt meiner Auslegung der Welt beruht jeweils auf einem Vorrat früherer Erfahrung: sowohl meiner eigenen unmittelbaren Erfahrungen als auch solcher Erfahrungen, die mir von meinen Mitmenschen, vor allem meinen Eltern, Lehrern usw. Übermittelt wurden. All diese mitgeteilten und unmittelbaren Erfahrungen schließen sich zu einer gewissen Einheit in der Form eines Wissensvorrats zusammen, der mir als Bezugsschema für den jeweiligen Schritt meiner Weltauslegung dient“(Schütz & Luckmann 1988: pp.29).

In the first place, children capabilities are shaped through social interaction and experiences within the household and then through other environments. It is important to note that adolescents are not *miniature adults*, although adult's well-being might not be possibly envisaged without reference to this early stage of life. It is not possible to

think about human development leaving away child issues. Key capability failures may be irreversible in later life in some cases. For example children who suffer irreversible forms of capability failure in terms of physical, emotional, mental and spiritual development. The capability approach analyses what teenagers are effectively able to do and to become in their future life. To which extent are they able to function with the goods and services at their reach and how do they make use of such opportunities? Those are the questions raised. However, the ability to convert resources and commodities into capabilities and functionings depends on the conversion factors, which can be internal like individual functioning or societal like environmental factors and institutions. In other words, this means that children should be active social actors and agents in their communities with their own priorities, strategies and aspirations. In this, there is a major difference with the so-called African conception of the child. In the Cameroonian mind-set for example, children are supposed to be ‘protected’ from mistakes as mother of family Bitchoga (B2) said since her children are expected to not know what they really want for their life. For this Cameroonian mother in Berlin for instance, children have no idea of how their own life can be valued. So she makes decisions for her children to better protect them from mistakes in life. Furthermore, some Cameroonian adults interviewed in this research like to take decisions for their children to ‘protect’ them from their own innocence and lack of life experience, because they have no life experience and are very likely to fail. Thus, children should benefit from parent’s and other adult’s life experiences. Moreover, it does not matter if adult’s decisions are the right ones for children or not (Tchegho 2002). Since children participation is considered to entail autonomy and early self-determination, this point remains very critical in Cameroonian families due to the cultural structure of Cameroonian households.

For Sen, poverty is the deprivation of capabilities:

- “1) Poverty can be sensibly defined in terms of capability deprivation (the connection with lowness of income is only instrumental);
  - 2) There are influences on capability deprivation other than lowness of income;
- and,



3) The instrumental relation between low income and low capabilities is parametrically variable between different communities and even between different families and different individuals” (Sen 1997: pp.195).

The core focus in the capability approach by Amartya Sen is on what individuals are able to do or to be. Low income is an important criterion to explain poverty but it doesn't cover the poverty reality comprehensively. According to Sen, the capability deprivation better expresses basic poverty aspects. Moreover the concept of capabilities is supposed to provide us with a middle term between *the subjectivity of preferences and the objectivity of needs* (Dieterlen, 2005). It is possible to regard the human development of children as Sen says as *an expansion of capabilities or of positive freedom*: Capabilities, choices, and conditions during childhood and adolescence crucially affect children's positions and capabilities as adults (Walker & Unterhalter 2007: pp. 197). So the child's experience can play a central role in an adult future life.

“We think that the Capability Approach per se is a powerful framework for understanding children's well-being in terms of capabilities because we, as researchers, are forced to think about the complexities that characterise children's lives in different environments and circumstances. Through the Capability Approach, we are analysing what children are effectively able to do and to be and what they have reason to value” (Andresen & al. 2010: pp. 86).

Application of the Capability Approach on children in Cameroonian households in Berlin is an innovation. The analysis of the capabilities of children with Cameroonian background in Berlin will show how much impact parent's influence on their children capabilities. Although the possibility of applying the Capability Approach to children is insufficiently explored, the literature review section reveals that *there are at least some relevant contributions that already demonstrate the importance of this approach*. We think that the Capability Approach per se is a powerful framework for understanding children's well-being in terms of Capabilities because researchers are focused to think about the complexities that characterise children's lives in different environments and circumstances. Through the Capability Approach, we are analysing *what children are*

*effectively able to do and to be and what they have reason to value* (Andresen & al. 2010: pp. 86).

The Capability Approach is concerned primarily with the identification of value-objects, and the evaluative space in terms of *functionings and capabilities to function* (Nussbaum & Sen 1993, pp: 32). As it is mentioned above, the capability approach encompasses three concepts: *functioning, capability and agency*. A functioning is being or doing what people value and have reason to value. A capability is a person's freedom to enjoy various functionings- to be or do things that contribute to their well-being. And Agency is a person's ability to pursue and realize goals s/he values and has reason to value (Deneulin and Shahani 2012: pp. 22). In this research, it will also be taken into account that *the Capability approach draws an important distinction between functionings and capabilities*. While functionings are the current doings and beings of persons, capabilities mean the real freedom of people to realise the life they have reason to value. Based on this fundamental distinction, research within the context of the Capability Approach should focus on what an individual Capability set looks like, including both obstacles and opportunities. Accordingly, *research on children would not address current doings and beings of the young people as subjects of research, but focus on their capabilities to lead a full human life that allows them to develop their full human potential, without any need to assess their contribution in order to legitimise their full membership* (Andresen & al. 2010: pp.71). For instance, the capabilities of children with Cameroonian background in Berlin will be analysed taking into account the perception of child poverty in the households where they grew up in.

### 1. 3. 2. Child poverty and the basic Capabilities

The term of "basic Capability" has been used by Amartya Sen (1980) as first rough attempt to answer the question *equality of what?* But in later work, Sen used the notion of "basic Capabilities" to refer to a threshold level for the relevant Capabilities, which is *the ability to satisfy certain elementary and crucially important functionings up to certain levels* (Sen 1992, pp.19 and 45). According to Sen basic Capabilities refer to be free to achieve some basic tasks considered necessary for a survival and to avoid or escape poverty or other serious deprivation in own life. Relevance of basic Capability is

not much in ranking living standard, but in *deciding on a cut-off point for the purpose of assessing poverty and deprivation* (Sen 1987, pp. 109).

According to Martha Nussbaum (200, pp. 84) basic Capabilities refer to *the innate equipment of individuals that is for developing the more advanced Capabilities*, like the Capability of speech and language, which is present by new-borns but needs to be fostered. The notion of basic Capabilities was used by Nussbaum to refer to the innate *equipment* of a person that will help him better develop his capabilities in future. Nussbaum frames the Capability Approach on ten principle basic Capabilities. According to her, political order are decent only if it secures at least a threshold level of these ten capabilities to all citizen (Nussbaum 2011: pp. 30-31). The core of these ten basic Capabilities is human dignity. And any single basic capability can be related to human characteristics like life for mortality, bodily integrity for human body, trust for early childhood development, cognitive capacities for senses, imagination and thought, concern of other humans for affiliation, autonomy for separateness, ecological solidarity for dependence on a respect for other species and nature, or play for being able to laugh, to play, to enjoy entertaining activities. Children in Cameroonian households living in Berlin fully enjoy this basic capability as stated by one son from the Atangana family: in the mind of a child, playing is most important thing.

Taking for example the basic capability of trust in early childhood related to our study cases, we can note a kind of balance in the way children in Cameroonian households in Berlin deal with it. They trust in the love of their parents and in family cohesion. They stated in their interviews that they place much confidence in their parents or in their family in terms of emotions. Although some of them also experienced anger in the framework of their respective families as the 16 years old son of family Atangana mentioned. These children were also able to have friends outside the family. They were able to love back who love them or care for them, to grieve at their absence also outside the family circle. They were able to longing or to justified anger. And this shows that they are fully in possessions of some of their basic emotional capabilities.

Children speech and language can be taken as basic capabilities. The basic capabilities refer to concrete opportunities of life that provide a basis for life without restrictions. To speak or to manage languages are basic conditions for children to express themselves in

the society. Children in Cameroonian households in Berlin in interviews in this research work also enjoy this basic capabilities in improving very good language skills. These children are able to well manage the current language spoken at home (English, French, or their parents' mother tongues) and they all had a very good command of the German language. The fact that they all express their need to make the interview in German because they feel comfortable in speaking German language was a very strong factor that they value their life in Germany and are able to best involved socially and culturally in Berlin.

Through the Capability Approach we are analysing *what children are effectively able to do and to be, i.e. how well children are able to function with the goods and services at their disposal* (Biggeri & al. 2011: pp.8) and interesting point would be to find out what children know about their own capabilities, in other words if children are aware of their freedom to value own life. This might determine how children deal with the choice they make for their future life, *because, the capabilities, choices and conditions experienced during childhood and adolescence crucially affect children's capabilities as adults* (Biggeri & al. 2011: pp. 22). Lack of basic capabilities for a child can deeply affect his future ability to have a good life. The Capability Approach has focused on participation, human being well-being and freedom as central features of development, combining ethics with economics as Biggeri wrote. The Capability Approach should not mislead us to think that it is only about poverty and development issues. The capability approach also deals with freedom or well-being.

The parent's skill has a direct impact on the capabilities of their children. For instance, at the household level, when a mother has a higher level of education, a child's opportunities in terms of health and education increase (Biggeri & al. 2011: pp. 29). The use of the Capability Approach helps to see children as active human beings experiencing a diversity of childhoods across different contexts and expressing different values in which they define their different ways as autonomous agents (Biggeri & al. 2011: pp. 38). Children grew up with their capabilities together, and the capabilities should be seen not within a static (as they usually are) but in a *dynamic framework*. According to Sen, basic needs can be seen as needs in the form of commodities like food, shelter, clothing, health care. Basic capabilities could also be seen as the ability to

satisfy some elementary and important survival functionings to avoid poverty or to get off it.

“The conversion of income into basic capabilities may vary greatly between individuals and also between different societies, so that the ability to reach minimally acceptable levels of basic capabilities can go with varying levels of minimally adequate incomes. The income-centred view of poverty, based on specifying an interpersonally invariant ‘poverty line’ income, may be very misleading in the identification and evaluation of poverty” (Nussbaum & Sen 1993, pp.41).

Operationally, the capability approach has the single most important function to make explicit some implicit assumptions in *the basic needs approach* about the value of choice and participation (Alkire 2002: pp. 170). This research focuses on participation of children with Cameroonian background in the German society, since *Children’s participation is central for understanding their capabilities* (Biggeri & al. 2011: pp. 200).

#### 1. 4. Children’s Rights and Capabilities

Children’s Capabilities are reflected in children’s rights in some ways. The Method of a list based on consensus for selecting areas of child well-being. This method has received widespread consensus, it involves identifying and using a set of areas previously established (Biggeri & al. 2011: pp. 57). The method of a list is based on the UN Convention or on the Rights of the Child (1989) such as nearly all the analysis of child issues. The Millennium Development Goals for example captures children’s well-being in their first six points: MDG 1: ‘Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger’, MDG 2: ‘Achieve universal primary education’, MDG 3: ‘Promote gender equality and empower women’, MDG 4: ‘Reduce child mortality’, MDG 5: ‘Improve maternal health’ and MDG 6: ‘Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases’ (See Ban Ki- Moon, UN 2007). The ILO also established children’s welfare goals regarding economic and non-economic exploitation. For instance two examples can be taken: the Convention N°. 138 on the Minimum Age (1973) and the Convention N°. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour (1999) (Biggeri & al. 2011: pp.58). Germany signed the CRC in 1992 and is

bound to respect the commitment of the CRC as such. The CRC is of concerned with all children living in Germany independently of their citizenship. The CRC focuses on the basic areas in children's life to better ensure the protection they need to grow up adequately.

Table 1: Terms relating to childhood and children's rights

This table attempts to structure/ classify the articles of the CRC according to relevant areas:

According to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Every child has the right to:	Articles:
Non-discrimination	2; 30
Action taken in their best interests	3; 18
Survival and development	6
Identity	7; 8
Family relations and parental guidance	5; 7; 8; 9; 10 9; 10; 18; 21; 25
Protection from illicit transfer and illegal adoption	11; 21
Freedom of expression, thought, conscience and religion	12; 13; 14
Freedom of association and peaceful assembly	15
State protection of privacy, home, family and correspondence	16
Access to appropriate information	17
Protection from abuse and neglect	19
Special protection and assistance if deprived of the family environment	20; 22
Protection from armed conflict	22; 38-39
Special care if disabled	23
Health and access to health-care services	24
Benefit from social security	26
A decent standard of living	27
Education	28; 29
Rest and leisure, play and recreation, culture and the arts	31
Protection from child labour, trafficking, sexual and other Forms of exploitation, and drug abuse	32-36; 39
Protection from torture and deprivation of liberty	37-39
Dignity and worth, even if the child has infringed the law	40

Source: Biggeri & al. 2011: pp. 58

This table is based on the Convention of the Rights of the child. Articles 2 (al.2) and 30 preserve all children and their Parents or legal guardians or family members from any forms of discrimination on any basis: cultural background, religion, language, or status. Article 24 deals with the sensitive question of health and articles 28 and 29 have to do with the main educational topics.

The Capabilities of children are also reflected in the CRC. The areas covered by the Capabilities of children are not conflicting with those relating to the fundamental Rights of the child. The table below draws the different Capabilities of children and the Rights areas that are covered in the CRC.

Table 2: CRC articles versus capabilities domains

Children's Capabilities domains	CRC articles	
	Direct	Indirect
Life and physical health	6; 23; 24; 25; 27; 29	(17); (19); (33); (37); (39)
Love and care	7; 9; 18; 20; 21; 26; 27	(3); (10); (22)
Mental well-being	23; 26; 27; 29; 37	(17); (19); (33); (39)
Body integrity and safety	19; 25; 26; 37	(23); (24); (39)
Social relations	15; 27; 29	(12)
Participation	12; 13; 15; 23; 29	(40)
Education	13; 24; 28	(32)
Freedom of saving money	19; 32; 34; 36	(34); (35)
And non-economic exploitation		
Shelter and environment		24(c); 27(3); 29 (c)
Leisure activities		31, (40)
Respect	16; 19; 23; 30; 39(2)	(2)
Religion and identity	8; 14; 29; 30; 31	(2); (7); (37)
Time- autonomy		(31); (37)
Mobility		(31); (37)

Source: Biggeri & al. 2011: pp. 59



The most basic Capabilities in the concern of children are reflected in the CRC either directly or indirectly. Children's Capabilities are expressed as very important issues in some articles. For instance, the social relations appears as Capability in the articles 15; 27; and 29 of the CRC; the education is the matter in articles 13; 24; and 28 of the CRC. Some other Capabilities to children are indirectly mentioned, this is for example the case of mobility in the article 31 and the article 37 of the CRC. These Capabilities are considered as children basic Capabilities. The CRC is therefore an important instrument to insure theoretically basic Capabilities to children. It is up to every child according to personal capacities and background to individually develop these Capabilities.

The capabilities of love and care as reflected by Articles 7; 9; 18; 20; 21; 26; 27 and 3; 10; 22, of CRC are very important to the child. Children in Cameroonian households in Berlin mentioned these very focus points of their life themselves. The 14 years old daughter of family Bitchoga recognized that her parents are the most important persons in her life and she trusts them and feel secure and valued life with her parents.

Regarding Family relations and parental guidance frames in Articles 5; 7; 8; 9; 10; 18; 21 and 25 of the CRC, we can note that children from Cameroonian household are enjoying this in Berlin as below stated by the 14 years old daughter of family Bitchoga mentioned:

Interview with daughter of family Bitchoga, B1 14 years old [L91-93]: *“[...] Wenn es um schulische Entscheidungen geht, oder so dann beraten mich meine Eltern, weil sie nicht wollen, dass ich Sachen bereue“*

Taking for example Art 27 of CRC related to decent standard of living, we can note that children in Cameroonian households in Berlin feel happy because they enjoy secure life in Germany. They have comparison elements between their life standard in Germany and children's life in Cameroon of their parents. Cameroonian parents interviewed for this research work have narrated about their children and their life experience in Cameroon. And these children trust on that experiences and they can compare it with their life in Berlin. The daughter of family Bitchoga for example said that she is happy of have being born and growing in Germany:

Interview with daughter of Family Bitchoga, 14 years old, B1

[L23-31]: *„[...] also ich fühle mich hier in Deutschland wohl, ich bin auch froh, dass ich in Deutschland geboren bin und auch aufwachsen kann [...] hmmm weil ich weiße*

*nicht, ich weiß nicht wie es wäre, wie es wäre ob ich jetzt in Kamerun aufgewachsen wäre [...] weil was meine Mutter hat mir erzählt ist schon so richtig, sie nehmen es richtig hart dran, aber in Deutschland ist es schon etwas lockerer. [...] Ich glaube es wäre schon einbisschen gestresster“*

Children's capability of education is a core point in children's future chances in a given society. Education is mentioned in articles 13; 24; 28 of CRC. This is a very important asset to help children have a better future life in society. Children in Cameroonian households in Berlin also enjoy this right:

Interview with son of Family Atangane, 16 years old, A1

[L137]: „[...] Also ich bin in der 12. Klasse“.

Interview with daughter of Family Bitchoga, 14 years old, B1

[L4-5]: „[...] Ich gehe auf einer bilingualen Schule“.

Interview with daughter of Family Camto, 13 years old, C1

[L137]: „[...] Ich gehe im [...] Gymnasium, und ich bin in die 7. Klasse“.

Interview with son of Family Deumaga, 11 years old, D1

[L5-6]: „[...]wie gesagt, ich bin hier geboren, ich bin hier zum Kindergarten gegangen, und zur Schule“

All children interviewed living in Cameroonian households in Berlin were enjoying their full right of education. From this view point, it can be said that these children have good basis to well prepare them for their future life in Germany.

The interviewed children in Cameroonian households also stated that they really enjoy their free time leisure in Berlin. Leisure activities are framed in Articles 31 and 40 of CRC. And they feel free to choose which free time activities they would like to do and at what time they want to stop doing this. Taking free decision on this scale is very important for this young people who are in the phase of building self-confidence.

Interview with daughter of Family Bitchoga, 14 years old, B1

[56-65]: *“[...] In meiner Freizeit lese ich gerne. Ich lese, und lese und lese. [...] ich treffe mich auch gerne, und am liebsten telefoniere ich mit meiner Freundin, weil sie nicht mehr hier lebt...sie lebt in Frankfurt, [...] ist umgezogen und ja, dann telefoniere ich halt sehr oft mit ihr. Und ich spiele Klavier, also ich habe da noch Klavier Unterricht... wöchentlich. [...] Also, ich habe sehr viele Sportarten gemacht, das letzte was ich gemacht habe war Tennis, und davor habe ich Basketball, Fußball und Schwimmen gemacht aber hat mir nicht mehr gefallen, also ich habe aufgehört“.*

Interview with son of Family Deumaga, 11 years old, D1

[L59]: *“[...] Ich bin Mitglied von einem Sport Club”.*

Children's capabilities on social relations (Articles 15, 27, 29 of CRC) and participation in social life (Articles 12; 13; 15; 23; 29 of CRC) were also mentioned by children in Cameroonian households in Berlin. Below find their responses:

Interview with daughter of Family Camto, 13 years old, C1

[L19-21]: *“[...] Ich habe viele Freunde. [Hmmm...] also ich kann jetzt nicht zählen, aber ich habe schon ziemlich viele Freunde. Also ich habe auch[hmmm...] deutsche Freunde, ich habe afrikanische Freunde [...]“.*

Interview with son of Family Deumaga, 11 years old, D1

[L69]: *“[...] Ich habe auch viele Freunde. Und, die sind halt nett zu mir [...]“.*

These assertions show that children in Cameroonian households in Berlin have very active lives outside the family and they also seem to very enjoy this social life very much.

Furthermore, enjoying their children's rights ensures that children feel happy in their life. The Cameroonian children interviewed in Berlin said that they felt happy. We take an example of an 11 years old son of family Deumaga:

Interview with son of Family Deumaga, 11 years old, D1

[L34]: “[...] *Ich fühle mich gerade sehr glücklich*“.

## 2. Situation of children at risk of poverty in Germany

As Hurrelmann stated: “Für viele Eltern ist heute die Entscheidung, eine Familie mit Kindern zu gründen, praktisch eine Entscheidung für gravierende und langfristige Einschränkungen von Lebensspielräumen” (Bertram & al. 1993: pp.64). This chapter deals with the situation of children at risk of poverty in Germany. The point is to specify which households with children are at risk of poverty in the German context. It is important to classify which categories of children are at high risk to be exposed to poverty in Germany to better understand the situation of Cameroonian children in Berlin in the context they live in. This is the reason why a particular group of children will be presented. In Germany there are particular children groups that are more at risk of poverty. It is for this reason that we present: Children with migrant background (2.1), Children in very large families (2.2), Children in households living with social transfers (2.3), and Children in single-parent household (2.4).

### 2. 1. Children with migrant background are at risk of poverty in Germany

From the study cases, Cameroonian parents in Berlin are very aware of the fact that they are migrants in Germany. Some of the parents complain that they not have good chances to better improve in life in Berlin. Mrs Atangana was over 30 years old at the time of the interview. She complained to not have any job, and still be a housewife after been for six years in Germany. And Mrs Bitchoga was 39 years old at the time of the interview. But she didn't feel like being home after past 17 years living in Berlin. This issue was complicated for her. These parents' experiences of migrant parents in Germany might have serious impact on their children.

In Germany children from households with migrant background are at risk of poverty. For some reasons, families with Cameroonian background in Germany might feel not to belong to the German society. This can be very detrimental for their children's future life opportunities; for the first experience of a social life is experienced within the

household for children. In the examples above, if these mothers do not feel to belong to the German society, this might have a direct influence on the social life of their children. People migrated to Germany need to speak the language very well to be able to perform and integrate in the German society. Many migrants who move to Germany cannot master the German language upon arrival. This means that they cannot access the social amenities at their disposition due to language barriers. Therefore, people with migrant background are at risk of lack of information about services that can help them escape poverty in Germany. This situation might be worse in migrant families with children: „...eine weitere Armuts-Risikogruppe stellen ausländische Familien dar“ (Butterwegge 2000: pp.13).

Germany welcomes a large number of migrants each year. We are in agreement with some authors that Germany is a migrant country: „Deutschland ist ein Zuwanderungsland“ (Schott & Hornberg 2011: pp.555). As stated in the previous section of this work, people migrate to Germany for many different reasons, but the most used motivation of migrants immigrating to Germany is economic (instrumental motivation). Most migrants in Germany come from poor countries and are looking for a better life:

“...Die in der Bundesrepublik lebenden Zuwandererfamilien stammen überwiegend aus Gesellschaften mit wenig ausgebauten sozialen Sicherungssystemen, wo intergenerationelle Beziehungen ohnehin einen höheren Stellenwert bei der gegenseitigen Existenzabsicherung haben” (Butterwegge 2010: pp. 525).

We need to strike a difference between EU citizens and other migrants in Germany because they do not enjoy the same rights. This may be one of the reasons why children with non-EU cultural background are seriously at risk of poverty as compared to EU-citizen children: “Besonders hohe Armutsrisiken tragen Kinder ohne EU-Staatsangehörigkeit” (Butterwegge 2010, pp.239). For instance, EU-citizen children in Germany have some advantages like priority to register at school, or to be exempted from school fees, or to have access to better medical care than the non-EU migrant children. Migrants in Germany are young, Antje Richter-Kornweitz stated that: „ In

Germany around 6 million (27.2%) of the under- 25- year- olds and 32.5% of the under- 6- year- olds have a migration background- although more than 90% of them were born in Germany”. According to the First World Vision Study, children with a migration background are much more likely to belong to the *socially deprived groups* (Andresen & al. 2010: pp. 164).

The migration factor is not necessarily an impediment to the Germany society. The German population is ageing, and this human potential will certainly play a key role in the future of Germany: “Daraus kann gefolgert werden, dass die Migrationsfamilie für eine wichtige Ressource darstellt, auch bei der Verarbeitung schulischer, beruflicher und sozialer Enttäuschungen” (Zander 2005: pp. 175).

But conversely, poverty among migrant and no- migrant children is still confusing:

“Schon bei den Kinderarmutskonzepten offenbarte sich, dass angesichts der (noch) lückenhaften Erkenntnislage zur Lebenssituation von armen Kindern sowohl mit als auch ohne Migrationshintergrund eine auch nur annähernd exakte Analyse von deren Armutsrisiken kaum möglich ist” (Butterwegge 2010: pp. 95).

Children with migration background almost grew up in families at risk of poverty in Germany:

“Kinder und Jugendliche mit Migrationshintergrund wachsen demnach häufig in Familien auf, die nach den sozioökonomischen Faktoren Ausbildung, Berufsstatus und Einkommen eine inferiore Stellung haben. Sie sind darüber hinaus in allen Aspekten von sozialer Deprivation, Wohnen (als Beispiel von fehlendem materiellen Wohlergehen), Bildung, soziale Kontakte und Versorgung sowie Gesundheit häufiger schlechter gestellt als deutsche Kinder und Jugendliche” (Zander 2005: pp. 173).

Poverty among migrant children in Germany may result in generational poverty because of some limitations, like lack of information and wrong schooling decisions for the children:

“Zu resümieren ist hinsichtlich der referierten quantitativen und qualitativen Forschungsergebnisse eine nach wie vor bestehende Bildungsbenachteiligung von Kindern mit Migrationshintergrund gegenüber einheimischen für alle Stufen der schulischen Laufbahn. Die Befunde aus dem vorschulischen Bereich weisen auf dessen maßgeblichen Einfluss für den späteren Schulerfolg von Migrantenkindern hin und offenbaren zugleich, dass Armut in Verbindung mit einem Migrationshintergrund offenbar jene Merkmalskombination darstellt, welche die Wahrscheinlichkeit einer Beeinträchtigung der kindlichen Entwicklung und Bildungschancen schon in frühem Kindesalter erhöht”. (Butterwegge 2010: pp. 292)

Moreover, migrant families usually constitute inward-looking communities withdrawn in their cultural networks in Germany. The language plays a very important role in this. The exclusion of migrants’ families is of no use to their children, if they are to better fit in the German social life, and understand the context they live in. For this reasons, children with a migrant background can be limited in their Social life in Germany, and as a consequence limited in their opportunities and capabilities in the society:

“The equality of opportunities is radically changing the representation of society” (Humbert and Sato 2012: pp.3)

## 2. 2. Children in very large families are at risk of poverty in Germany

All Cameroonian households in Berlin target in this research had at least two or more children at the moment of the interviews in 2013. The family Atangana had two children, and was expecting to a third one, the family Bitchoga had four children, the family Camto had three children and the family Deumaga had two children. It can therefore be stated that Cameroonian households in Berlin are very large families. It can also be said that they might be at high risk of poverty, for households with many children in Germany are more risk of poverty as Palentien stated:

“Kinderreiche Familien stellen eine weitere Bevölkerungsgruppe, die von Armut bedroht ist dar. Kinder verursachen in der Bundesrepublik monatliche Kosten...” (Palentien 2004: pp194)

This means that children are ‘expensive’. And it is a wide spread opinion in Germany, and for this reason a child should be a well-planned project. Many adults in Germany give birth to as many children as they are financially able to care after. And because of the rapid increase of the cost of living, many people like to stay childless. As it is written above, the family structure of migrant living in Germany is very different often because of their different cultural background. Many migrants in Germany come from countries where the social welfare system does not exist, and the situation is completely different in Germany. In one sense, this means that the social transfers from the state to households for their children, in Germany ‘Kindergeld’ is something new for these newcomers. A Cameroonian family living in Germany for example is not familiar with the concept of social transfers because this is inexistent in their home country. Government transfers to households for children issues might be a motivation for Cameroonian households to make more children than usual. In addition, it must be said that a child represents wealth in the Cameroonian and in the African culture at large. Originally, it is culturally very important for Cameroonian people to make many children as reflected on their interviews. Moreover, other migrant groups in Germany do make many children as recognized by Zander:

“Familien mit ausländischer Nationalität und wohl auch Familien mit Migrationshintergrund sind zweitens überproportional in der Gruppe der Kinderreichen Haushalte (solche mit drei und mehr Kinder) vertreten... Die Kinder leben nicht notwendigerweise im Haushalt der Eltern. Dennoch können die Angaben als Indiz für eine höhere Kinderzahl als in deutsch-autochthonen Familien üblich bewertet werden” (Zander 2005: pp.164-165)

It may appear very rustically to think that many migrants in Germany make many children because of social transfers and allowances generated. For Cameroonian households for instance, there are some cultural reasons justifying why they make so



many children. Most Cameroonian parents in Berlin grew up in Africa, in very large families, and they are strongly influenced by this cultural background. The education they have received in their home country consider human being to be the core of life. Human beings are the most important component of society in the Cameroonian mind-set, and every new child is always welcome. For Cameroonian women, it means that having children is a necessity, to be able to participate to the perpetration of the lineage. Cameroonian men also have an urge to make children in order to value their culture. And for such men, it is particularly important to have boys who will perpetrate their family name. As it is noted before, the human being is at the core of the Cameroonian family. Cameroonian parents involved in this research grew up in the Cameroonian context and it is important for them to have many children. When Cameroonian people live in Germany as family, children transfers from the state may become an additional motivation for them to make more children than usual. When we observe a child having only a Cameroonian cultural background, this is also noticed in large families that, a new child in the family can never be a trigger of poverty; and yet, poverty rates in Germany for families tend to increase with the number of children in the household (National Council of welfare Reports 2001). Cameroonian people are only one migrant group in Germany, and might make as many children as other migrant groups do, and the reason for this can be explained on the basis of their culture. The truth is that children in large families are at risk of poverty in Germany, and for this reason, most children in families with migrant background are at very risk of poverty.

## 2. 3. Children in households living on social transfers are at risk of poverty in Germany

In Germany like in most rich countries, poor people live on the financial support provided by Government through social transfers. This group of the population represents non-workers and those who are automatically classified as poor:

„Ein wesentlicher Indikator für die Armutsgefährdung einer sozialen Gruppe ist allerdings der darin enthaltene Anteil an Sozialhilfeempfänger(inne)n“ (Butterwegge 2000: pp.73).

Households living on social transfers in Germany are particularly considered poor when they have children. The reason for this is that young people in Germany are more notably vulnerable to poverty as Zander wrote: “Kinder, die in Arbeitslosenhaushalten leben, sind am stärksten von Armut betroffen” (Zander 2005: pp.164). Poverty in a rich country like Germany is a complex phenomenon and a very sophisticated one. Willke stated:

“Für reiche Länder gibt es keine eindeutige Definition von Armut; unstrittig ist lediglich, dass es sich um Armut auf hohem Niveau handelt” (Willke 2011: pp.7).

In Germany, poverty is not a survival issue. For this reason, many types of poverty can be hidden, if they are not externally visible. For instance, the relative approach of poverty is often used in Germany:

“Armut ist für hochentwickelte Gesellschaften wie die Bundesrepublik ein *relatives* Phänomen, also in der Regel keine Frage des physischen Überlebens, sondern eine Frage des menschenwürdigen Lebens. Man kann sie nicht absolut im Sinne eines physischen Existenzminimums definieren, sondern nur in Relation zu gesamtgesellschaftlichen Lebensgewohnheiten” (Butterwegge 2000: pp. 64).

This is the reason why in this research, the approach to poverty used is the relative approach because the research is about children with Cameroonian background who live in Germany. The relative approach of poverty supposes that people are no more fighting for survival, but to live they have a minimum income mostly ensured by government transfers. Even in the relative perception of poverty, some parameters have to be taken into account:

“Innerhalb der relativen Armut unterscheidet man zwischen zwei verschiedenen Armutskonzepten: dem ressourcenorientierten Ansatz und dem mehrdimensionalen Lebenslagenansatz” (Reichwein 2010: pp. 32).

The resource-oriented approach of poverty is for example the approach used by the EU to determine poor households in its member states. There is another parameter that is very important: the life conditions approach which can better capture the way of life of people in rich countries. To present the life conditions of children with Cameroonian background in Berlin, we need to analyse their life in the family from inside; since *research on poverty in rich countries rely primarily on household income to capture living standards and distinguish those in poverty, and this is also true of official poverty measurement and monitoring for policy-making purposes in those countries* (Nolan and Whelan 2011: pp.1). It is important to keep in mind that the income of parents plays a very prominent role on how the household feels in general with all its members. Nünning writes:

“Arm ist eine Familie, wenn sie zu den einkommensarmen Haushalten (verstanden als relative Armut gemessen an 50% des gewichteten durchschnittlichen Haushaltseinkommens) zählt oder wenn sie Sozialhilfe (heute auch Arbeitslosengeld II) bzw. Leistungen nach dem Asylbewerberleistungsgesetz erhält” (Zander 2005: pp.161).

Some parents do not have enough money to live the life they want to, or to offer their children toys or leisure that permits children to have social contacts and meet with other children. In Germany this leads to social inability. Children in Germany are in this way technically safe from the extreme penury aspect of poverty but can be exposed to relative poverty:

“In den wohlhabenden Ländern müssen keine Kinder mehr verhungern, und sie leiden hier eher selten an Mangelkrankheiten...Dennoch leben Kinder in vielen hoch entwickelten Industrieländern und eben auch in Deutschland häufig in relativer Armut, weil ihre Eltern oder andere, die sie unterstützen, nicht in der Lage sind, die notwendige materielle Sicherheit zu gewährleisten, um unabhängig von staatlichen Unterstützungsleistungen leben zu können. Die materielle Unsicherheit, die viele Kinder erleben, hat sicherlich nicht für alle von ihnen im späteren Leben negative Konsequenzen, denn häufig sind solche Phasen der materiellen Unsicherheit zeitlich eng befristet, und der

Zusammenhalt zwischen Familie und Nachbarschaft hilft auch häufig über solche Phasen hinweg” (Bertram 2008: pp. 20-21).

Social transfers granted to families in need cannot keep children from poverty, because they do not compensate for the lack of income of families with children (European Commission 2008: pp.33). In cases where parents have only limited financial resources in a household, they will decide which basic needs are necessary for their children among the multiple basic needs children have. For sure, it is not possible to determine how much money is allocated to children issues in jobless households:

“Über verfügbare materielle Ressourcen wie Kleidung, Spielzeug und andere vom Einkommen der Familie abhängige Gebrauchsgüter ist nichts bekannt, ebenso wenig über die Höhe des Taschengeldes” (Zander 2005: pp.167).

Furthermore the decisions of parents on children issues may differ depending on the working situation of parents. Children may not see their parents as models if the sole income source of the household comes from social transfers; this might not be the case in poor worker’s households. The working status of parents can be a motivating factor for children’s Capabilities in future, as an eleven years old son of the family Deumaga rightly described in his interview that he wanted to be a computer engineer in future like his father. He got this inspiration from his father who works in this area and earns good salary. His father is a role model he really wants to follow in his future life.

The worse scenario for poor children in Germany can be when they live in households whose unique income is from social transfers, because their parents will not be a reference that motivates them for a future job. But other factors can make the situation worse, and that is when poor households with children are also single-parent. Wages is the primary source of income of families. The poverty risk threshold is set at 60% of the national median equivalent household income in Germany. And the labour situation of migrant parents is a crucial issue because migrants in Germany face many difficulties that determine their working status. Referring to the non-EU migrant in Europe Álvarez-Miranda thinks that much of the disadvantages of migrants labour in the labour

market has to do with cultural distance; most obvious is the cost of learning the language of the host society in order to be able to look for a job and perform well; for this reason, the lack of familiarity with the local rules and standard procedures also makes self-presentation of a reliable and skilled worker more difficult...Job experience in the home country is not enough, *migrants need to learn the way things are done in the host country* (Faser & al. 2011: pp.258). Furthermore it can be noticed that the educational level of parent's impact on their labour situation, and definitely on their children's education. Living in a household where no one works is likely to significantly affect both children's current living conditions and the conditions in which they develop for lack of an appropriate role model (European commission 2008: pp. 28). Not all children whose parents are working are safe from poverty, because some parents are the working poor. For instance unemployment particularly affects single-parent households because they are faced with more difficulties to adjust their professional and family lives.

## 2. 4. Children in single-parent households are at risk of poverty

According to Bertram: "Man kann das für fast alle Altersgruppen inzwischen zeigen, daß das Ledig sein die wirkliche Alternative zur Familie geworden ist" (Bertram & al. 1993: pp.83). Single-parent households in Germany are no more an exception. But it is important to note that whether a child grew up poor or not remains a decisive factor. And Butterwegge stated:

"Alleinerziehende und Mehrkinderhaushalte sind stärker von Armut bedroht, und zwar sowohl im Hinblick auf die Gefahr der Sozialhilfeabhängigkeit an sich als auch im Hinblick auf die Dauer der Abhängigkeit..." (Butterwegge 2000: pp.13).

Children who live in a lone-parent household are strongly at risk of poverty in Germany. In most cases, the lone parent is the mother. A single-parent household is a household where a parent lives alone with one or more children permanently because of death, divorce or separation from his/her partner:

“Alleinerziehende sind Mütter und Väter, die ohne Ehe- oder Lebenspartner/-in mit minder- oder volljährigen Kinder in einem Haushalt zusammenleben” (Statistisches Bundesamt 2013: pp. 18)

The demography of Germany is changing because of multiple divorces and few engagements of adults. This implies increasingly more lone-parent households, either because parents divorce, or because they are not in a union. Those parents have particularly difficulties to combine both, family life and carrier. Since women have difficulties building a carrier or getting a job after having gotten the first child, lone-parent households with a woman as head are at high risk of poverty: “Die Gruppen der Alleinerziehenden- vor allem der allein erziehenden Frauen- und der Nichtdeutschen sind überproportional stark von Arbeitslosigkeit betroffen” (Butterwegge 2000: pp.14).

Many single mothers have difficulties bringing up a child or children alone in households. The situation of children in lone-parent households can be worse and irreversible depending on the number of children living with the lone-parent. In case the lone-family has many children, it can be much worse for both, the mother/father and her/his children. If it is considered that the education of every single child should be exclusive and particular because every child has a particular identity, the education of children in a lone-parent household cannot be up to what children need for their good physical, spiritual and emotional development. Let’s take the case where the mother has two children and must ensure their education alone. Even though this single mother has a job, it is difficult for her to provide for all her child/children needs, emotionally, spiritually and/or financially. Children need time, money, love, patience, leisure, social contacts, and models to refer to, when they dream of their future. Young people under the age of 18 years are hardly, or even are not able to understand that their single mother/father may not be able to ensure in the best possible way all the various aspects in their education. And the fear not to be up to the task and rich enough to satisfied their own children’s aspirations make a lot of pressure and stress on the single parent facing this perpetual challenge.

### 3. Children are the wealth for Cameroonian households

Table 3: Operationalisation of the theoretical pattern on the samples

<b>Perception of child poverty in Cameroonian households</b>	<b>Cultural Background</b>	<b>Capability Approach</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents: A cultural viewpoint of child poverty</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Child poverty does not exist in the Cameroonian culture</li> <li>Children are the wealth</li> <li>A large family is an asset for future</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are Cameroonian households excluded from social life in Berlin?</li> <li>How does the perception of child poverty matter in life of Cameroonian households in Berlin?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children: A mixed viewpoint of child poverty</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Child poverty is a material issue</li> <li>No experience of child poverty</li> </ul>	
Cameroonian parents in Berlin stick to their African culture on their children's education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transmission of the Cameroonian culture and African values through the mother tongue, traditional food, cultural attire</li> <li>The life in Berlin has German realities outdoor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The hybrid identity of Cameroonian children in Berlin</li> <li>The Perfect language skills of Cameroonian Children in Berlin</li> </ul>
Children in Cameroonian households in Berlin live in between two cultures		
Generational conflicts in Cameroonian households in Berlin?	Cameroonian parents enjoy their African culture in Berlin	Does the Cameroonian culture impact the socialisation of Cameroonian children in Berlin?
	Children with Cameroonian background live in between two worlds in Berlin	Which future life opportunities do Cameroonian children in Berlin have?

Source: Self-made table

While interviews with Cameroonians in Berlin for this research work, it appeared that children are representing the wealth in Cameroonian households. Cameroonian parents always made reference to their culture to explain their child poverty view point. So the Capability Approach has been confronted to this cultural view point in this table. According to this, it can be asked if Cameroonian households are completely excluded from the social life in Berlin because child poverty is non-existing in their mind set.

To better understand the Cameroonian family, it is meaningful to present the Cameroonian household in its cultural expression. This Chapter aims at presenting the Cameroonian family from the core. This is the reason why the first step in this chapter will present a child in the Cameroonian family (3.1), before presenting the perception of the family concept through some Cameroonian languages (3.2). At the end of this chapter it would be necessary to draw a profile the Cameroonian family life in Berlin (3.3).

### 3. 1. A child in the Cameroonian family

A child in Cameroonian families represents a print that people leave before passing on (Nkouendjin Y. 1975). Having children is a surviving strategy for many Cameroonian families. Considering that the ultimate goal of marriage is to bare children, once two persons get married, the next step for a Cameroonian couple will be having many children. For Bamiléké people for example (from West Cameroon), the purpose for getting married is to have children (Tchegho 2002, p.21). Women were encouraged to have an active sexual life right after weaning their baby to look for the next child. Through children, the family name remains 'alive'. For Bamiléké people in Cameroon, it is crucial having many children to preserve their patronymic (Tchegho, 2002: p.42-43). Through this, ancestor lineages will be perpetuated, and parents will remain *immortal*. For this reason, the concept of family with many children has a particular meaning for Cameroonian people. But the concept of family is not amenable to a simple definition (Binet 1979). To better understand the Cameroonian family, it is essential to grasp how parenthood works for Cameroonians, because kinship in the Cameroon family is a real social issue rather than a biological one. Since the kinship relations are



not biological but a set of *social relationships that are mapped on to biological relations* (Scott 2006: p.93). The Cameroonian family is a very large social community. All family members are involved and committed in any action undertaken by any single individual in the family. Accordingly, the marriage bond does not bind just two people, but it is a tie that brings two large families together. People need no biological *relationship* to be considered as relatives and each relative is simultaneously a potential parent, child or grandparent in the Cameroonian family. Reasons for the elasticity of the family ties are not always the same:

“Alors qu’il est vrai que le désir d’une descendance nombreuse persiste au Cameroun, comme dans beaucoup d’autres pays africains, il est important de reconnaître que les motivations derrière ce désir ne sont pas homogènes” (Calvès & Meekers 1997, p. 23) [*Since it is true that people in Cameroon wish to have many children, like it is in many other African countries. But it is important to note that reasons doing this are not homogeneous at all.*]

And according to the OECD Social Indicator Development Programme, the “...Kinship affects personal development, health, the transfer of wealth between generations, attitudes to work, etc. This mediating role will have to be taken into account when relating levels of well-being in various social concerns to influencing factors” (OECD 1976: pp. 17)

Cameroonian families need to have as many children as possible to perpetuate their lineage. The reasons for having many children can differ from family to family. One most popular belief in the Cameroonian culture is that children represent the wealth of families (Itoua 1987).

Every maternity is a sign of divine blessing and every single new-born child represents the return of an ancestor in the clan of Cameroonian families. Cameroonian households have some similar motivations for having a large family. It can be noted that, the most mentioned reasons for many Cameroonian families to have many children is for the survival of the lineage, or for economic reasons, because these children will assist the adults (Boserup, 1985) in future. One Cameroonian mother interviewed in this research better conveys this thought:

Interview with mother of Family Atangana, over 30 years old, A2

[L15-20]: „*When we (Africans) have children, we think we are rich. Actually in a sense it may be so...may be at old age, if the children are well educated and they...hold good positions and responsibility, and [hmmm] they can remember that...they have parents, then they may support them financially, and even [hmmm... ...] morally or provide some care, so to speak.*“

Based on this assertion of a Cameroonian mother in Berlin, it can be said that children according to Cameroonian parents represent a kind of care guarantee for the family when the parents are old. Parents in a Cameroonian family hope that their children will support them when they grow up and succeed in life. These parents hope that they will not be abandoned by their own children, or forced to end up in old people's home.

Having many children gives some socio-cultural advantages and a real “status” to Cameroonian people. In the Cameroonian mind, having many children is an important attribute for notability (Tchegho 2002: p.97). The influence of a prominent citizen depends on how many children s/he has and how large her/his family is. For instance, Bamiléké people in Cameroon practice skull worship with sacrifices. Childless women don't benefit from sacrifice after death because direct descendants are the people who take part to this particular ceremony. A woman without biological children is considered to have had a useless life (Yana 1985: pp.128-129). On the other side, some children become family heads after the death of their father. Mothers of these successors became particularly important in families and they are called ‘Mafo’ (Yana 1985: 129). A very large kinship represents potential wealth for Cameroonian families. For Yana, human potential is wealth according to the Pahouin people in Cameroon (1985). For Pahouin families (‘Ndabot<sup>2</sup>’) the chief is called ‘Nkukuma’ and he is a wealthy man: the ‘Akuma’ means all people that he rules and who are under his authority. This means people are the wealth of the Paphouin community. These are all characteristics of the Cameroonian culture, and Cameroonian parents who grew up in the Cameroonian context are bound to transmit their cultural inheritance to their children in Berlin. According to Nkouendjin Yotnda (1975) many Cameroonian families have respect for the ‘droit ancestral’ (ancestors’ law). It means with the genuine traditional values of

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<sup>2</sup> This word means in the Pahouin language :Éwondô, « house of people »

their society, they have many children because it shows the power of the family to extend as much as possible its influence. Many Cameroonian families rely on their relatives to bring up their children according to the principles of solidarity within the group (Nkouendjin Y. 1975). Having many children is a safe financial investment for future for many Cameroonian parents, as mother in family Bitschoga in Berlin stated that *whatever own children have, it belongs to parents*.

Otherwise, there are some socio-cultural advantages in having many children according to Cameroonian people, for the maternity is strongly attached to social status. Cameroonian women with children are considered to be more importantly respected than childless women. Being able to have children is also one of the motivations for Cameroonian men to get married. In general, men need a 'proof', an evidence of a woman's fertility before they can undertake to marry her. This leads to many Cameroonian women bearing children before getting marriage. This notwithstanding, getting a husband is not that easy in Cameroonian communities. For instance, for Béti-Fang (or Pahouin) people coming from the southern part of Cameroon, children born before marriage have an inferior status compared to 'legitimate' children. And married people without children are considered to be under a curse (Tchegho 2002: p.48). Once married Cameroonian people must have children as soon as possible, otherwise they will look strange to their relatives.

The most common reason for polygamous families among Cameroonian people is the need to have many children. In the Cameroonian mind-set, polygamy is a way of teaching people solidarity values rather than individualist ones promoted in monogamous households (Tchegho 2002, p.23). In polygamous households everything is done in the clan's name. That is why in monogamy, the language spoken is 'my husband', 'my house' and 'my child', but in the case of polygamy people would say 'our husband', 'our house' and 'our children'. Furthermore, for Tchegho (2002: p.24), many children happen to discover their 'real' mother's name on their birth certificate, at the end of their primary school cycle when they present it to the school advisor for an exam (see Tchegho 2002: pp.54). Children from large families grew up with 'many mothers' and with many fathers.

This Cameroonian culture places children at the heart of the family survival. The child is thus the cornerstone in this culture. This traditional African education is based on some values that are transmitted over the generations. A Cameroonian child belongs to a large community and his education is the common responsibility of both his biological parents, and all adults who are members of the large family. It is for this reason that education of a Cameroonian child is plural. From abroad, relatives can support any child despite the geographic distance. This multiple influence on the child education should reinforce the cohesion of the group by making every adult responsible over every child. In this way, every adult is supposed to be a parent and every child should never be considered as orphan, because a child has many “parents”. Child education is based on his active participation in group activities. This is about real-life pedagogy where adults are references. The education of African children is continuous and gradual over age hierarchy. Children are prepared to better deal with life frustrations and disappointments in the group. Most values like respect of older people are oral and are transmitted from generations to generations. The Cameroonian culture built a bridge from the visible to the invisible world. That is a way to give an explanation reality, at any time. Traditional beliefs make a connection between the living and the dead; the birth of a child has a very important significance in their eyes. The structure of Cameroonian clans has three different kinds of person: people who are alive make up the first category; those who are dead belong to the second one, and the third category is made up of children who are yet to be born (Tchegho 2002 : pp.77).

Table 4: Composition of the Cameroonian family members

The Unborn	The living	The dead
1. Foetus to come	1. The new-born (Children)	1. The living- dead (recently dead. According to the common memory in the community)
2. The foetus	2. Adults	2. The ancestors (past departed)

Source: self-made table

To Cameroonian people, new-borns are sent by long time died ancestors. In this way, a new-born child in a Cameroonian household is a message from the invisible world. For Cameroonian parents, this is currently seen as the coming back of any ancestor or any other relative. This plays a decisive role for example for the choice of name of the new-born child (namesake). The belief is that dead people remain “alive” through their names in the family. Many children are respected like the name that they bear because a new child is the representation of the person who he was named after. This child should perpetuate his existence. For this reason, children must be mystically attached to their place of birth. To materialise this attachment, in many Cameroonian traditions, like the Ssô, the Éwondo, the Bamiléké, the Bafia, the Bassâ, and some others in Cameroon, parents have to bury the placenta of the new-born child in the place they want the child to be attached. This practice is meant to condemn the child to ever come back to his/her native place after death. This is one reason why Cameroonian families carefully choose the names of their children. When choosing the name of a new-born child, there is an important ceremony. Many Cameroonian have two Names: the father’s or the mother’s name and the ‘namesake’. One of the parent’s names is given to identify the roots of a child. The second name is meticulously chosen among the elders or ancestors, preferably from the father’s side, and the child represents the one who had this name before. It doesn’t play any role for the namesake is dead long time ago. Children make the link between the realm of living and the one of the dead. Giving the name of an elder or a dead person is a way for those parents to maintain this person alive. When giving the first name, some parents are inspired by a future hope or current significant events in the family. People think that the first name might influence a person’s live or the relatives’. Nowadays, African many children generally have two first names; it can even be name of the day corresponding to their birth (e.g.: Monday) and another one translating the expectations of parents. The Yoruba people, a West African ethnic group in Nigeria, choose as first name for new-born babies an ‘ORUKU’ first name that describes the circumstances of the child’s birth. For boys we can note the name ‘ABEGUNDE’ that means, ‘born on a public holiday’, and for girls we have ‘BEJIDE’ meaning, ‘born in the rainy season’. Later on, Yoruba children became an ‘ORIKI’ first name that means hope in the future. A further example is “DUNSIMI” which means “DON’T DIE BEFORE ME” or ‘TITILAYO’ that is ‘LIFELONG HAPPINESS’. In the

coastal region of Kenya Swahili people new-born babies receive from an elderly person a 'JINA LA UTOTONI' that means 'The 1<sup>st</sup> first name' or 'The birth first name'. The Jina La Utotoni is given by a close relative and is related to the physical appearance of the child. Thus we have as example 'BIUBWA' for 'SWEET and SMOOTH LIKE A BABY'; or 'HAIDAR' for a baby that looks 'STRONG and STURDY'. When the baby is about one month old, parents or paternal grand-parents must choose an 'adult first name': the 'JINA LA UKUBWANI'. The AKAN people in Southern Ghana organise a ceremony a week after the baby is born. The father should choose as first name of his close elderly person for the baby. The aim is to wish to the new-born baby a long and respected life just as that of the chosen person. In the Kwa language spoken by Akan people in Ghana, first names have specific definitions. 'KOJO' for example means 'BORN ON MONDAY', or 'MINKAH' that means 'Bearer of Justice'. Madingué people from Gambia in the village of Djouffouré organize an important ceremony to give a name to a new-born child in the 8<sup>th</sup> day following the birth of the child. A new-born child becomes member of the tribe or the clan just after this traditional process. The new-born child is the first person to hear its name from the father. Thus the biological father whisper three times the chosen name in the baby's ear in the general assembly organized. And then, he says it in a low voice to the mother, before telling it gently to the *Arafang*, the future traditional guide of the baby. The *Arafang* should proclaimed aloud to others the name of the new-born child. At this point, the child becomes a member of the Madingué clan. This name is made up of three parts: the first name, the father's name, and the namesake. The namesake is in general the name of an ancestor, or an old person in the clan.

Yet, another example can be taken still from Akan people from the former Ashanti Empire (1701-1896) in West Africa. The Akan language also known as *Twi-Fante* is a group of languages within the Kwa group of languages in Ghana and in Ivory Coast. In the Akan culture, children names are given depending on the day of birth and the number of sisters and brothers the child already has. The name of Cameroonian people in this research also have particular significance: *À Messe* for example means in the Bâfia language the son of the person calls Messe, *Bisai* means in the Bâssa language, the blessings.

As early stated, the Cameroonian family is constituted of three classes: the living, the dead and the unborn children. Children are the most important in families because they set a bridge between the living and the dead. In some communities the desire for children depends on the matrimonial status. For some Cameroonian women have children before getting married as an evidence of fertility, which is a strategy to accelerate the prenuptial process (Calves & Meekers 1997). In those cases it is not necessarily important for her to perpetrate the name of the family. For Cameroonian women, extra-marital children belong to her family. The Cameroonian extra-marital child is mostly referred to as the *family's child*. Above all considerations, children are deemed to be a gift from God in the Cameroonian mind-set. Cameroonian families have a cyclic conception of life: New-born come from the ancestors' world to bring a message or to accomplish a mission in the living world before going back to the ancestors at death. It appears like children can choose in advance the family they want to born in. The Béti people in Cameroon think that a baby is a reincarnated ancestor, who comes to protect the family from any imminent danger (Mbala Owono, 1982).

In case of necessity, families can regroup an impressive number of people directly concerned with an issue to settle matters together (Tchegho 2002: pp.83). Family's members have a moto: 'A TAM SOMO BA'A TAMO'O' (Tchegho 2002: pp.84), this mean in Baham language in Cameroon that, 'If my relative by marriage is concerned, I am concerned as well'. This rule creates a solidarity network between relatives. But Tchegho also recognised that this solidarity is losing its dynamics and substance to date because of the rapid changes in the socio-cultural environment. For Albert Têvoêdjêrê, the solidarity contract between people should show *the power of poverty*. This entails that poor people feel the necessity to act and to stay together. People develop particular sensitivity and the importance to be together. Solidarity in Cameroonian families follows a philosophy: *Alone the dream persists, but together the dream come truth*. This comforts the opinion that poverty can breed good ideas. The family plays a fundamental role for Cameroonian people and solidarity finds its meaning in this basic unit for children. *Family Cohabitation principle and the strength of family solidarities* (Paugam: 2005) the kid's integration among poor people first begins in the family and then in the society. Thus financially "rich" relatives in the family support the others who have less or no resource at all:

“Für einkommensarme Familien haben verwandtschaftliche Netzwerke einen größeren Stellenwert als für wohlhabende. Verwandte können ihnen vielfältige Hilfs- und Unterstützungsfunktionen bieten, die von finanzieller Unterstützung, Zuwendung in Naturalien (z. B. Ernährung), Entlastung bei der Kinderbetreuung und Abwechslung durch Besuche und Familienfeiern über die Erfüllung von Wünschen der Kinder (z. B. in Bezug auf spezielle Kleidung oder Spielzeug) bis hin zu gemeinsamen Urlaubsreisen reichen” (Butterwegge 2010: pp.298).

Cameroonian households in Berlin reflect this cultural inheritance. A1 was a 16 years old young boy at the time of this interview in 2013. He declared:

Interview with son of Family Atangana, 16 years old, A1

[L122-135]: „Und ja, [...] und, also wie ich gehört habe ist es in Afrika so, dass man zusammen hält,... merkt man ja auch ein bisschen so, wenn man sieht so auf der Straße sieht, aus anderen Ländern..., dann begrüßt der eine, und [hmmm...] es ist halt so, dass auch hier in der Familie so ein sehr soziales Leben herrscht Also, zum Beispiel meine Mutter und meine Brüder und so sagen mir alle immer, dass die Familie und so zusammen hält und so. Also was ich auch wirklich merke und so, also das einzige was ich wirklich stark ausgeprägt sehe ich hier in dieser Familie, ist das Alle sobald man ein Problem hat,... alle versuchen das zu lösen und [hmmm...] alle versuchen halt dann, sie setzen sich zusammen wirklich um die Person, die ein Problem hat in der Familie zu helfen. Sie halten alle sehr zusammen, und ja [...] und sie sind dann halt so wie eine Einheit, wie so eine Mannschaft so zu sagen. Alle [...] alle für einen,...einer für alle“

### Roles sharing in the Cameroonian family

Cameroonians have a particular picture of the family rooted in their specific cultural background, for children are the pillar of the Cameroonian family, and a family is a large group of many small families. The Cameroonian family is not a biological concept, but a very broad social reality. This view of the family is totally different from the ‘German’ acceptance which limits the scope of the family to parents and their



children: "In der Bundesrepublik Deutschland ist die heute 'normale' Familie die Zweigenerationen- Familie, Eltern und nichterwachsene Kinder" (Geißler 1982: pp. 68). As a result, this complex picture of the Cameroonian family portrays a very tricky role sharing in the household. The basic role of the nuclear family by Parsons reflects the view of the family in the German society; the nuclear family refers strictly to parents and their children. Such a family conception sounds strange to Cameroonian people, particularly for those who grew up in Cameroon, like as Cameroonian parents in Berlin interviewed in this research work. The interaction between relatives of many different nuclear families is central in Cameroonian communities. But when we compare the role of different family members by Parsons with the organisation of the Cameroonian family, many similarities appear. For Parsons:

“The father role is, relating to the others, high both on power and on ‘instrumentality’- hence low on ‘expressiveness’. The mother role is high on power and on ‘expressiveness’ thus low in instrumentality. The son role is low on power but high on instrumentality, the daughter role low on power but high on expressiveness- hence low on instrumentality” (Parsons and Bales 1955: 45)

Table 5: The role of different family members by Parson

		Instrumental Priority	Expressive Priority
Power	Superior +	Instrumental superior  Father (husband)	Expressive superior  Mother (wife)
	Inferior -	Instrumental inferior  Son (brother)	Expressive inferior  Daughter (sister)

Source: Parsons and Bales 1955: pp.46

The only major difference between the basic roles in the nuclear family by Parson and the Cameroonian very large family is that Cameroonian children have many ‘parents’ and Cameroonian parents have many ‘children’. This parenthood is not necessarily biological. In the Cameroonian family, the circle of relatives is extended, the notion of father is used to refer to both uncles and to the biological father, the notion of mother refers both to aunts and to the biological mother, and nieces and nephews are called daughters and sons, just like cousins are brothers and sisters. This infers that every Cameroonian adult has many ‘children’ and every Cameroonian child always has many ‘fathers’ and many ‘mothers’.

This means that Cameroonian people try to perpetrate their original family model in Germany. Allowing some exceptions, Cameroonian households in Berlin try to be like most households in sub-Saharan Africa that are hierarchical and patriarchal. Cameroonian families are seldom nuclear (Makinwa- Adebusoye 2001). The families are embracing kinship networks and the degree or the closeness of relations do not matter. For this reason, many concepts like aunt, uncle, nephew, niece and cousin simply do not exist in Cameroonian languages<sup>3</sup>. These notions are embedded in the same words that refer to direct relatives. The appellation ‘mother’ also refers to ‘aunt’; the notions ‘son’ and ‘daughter’ are used instead of ‘nephew’ and ‘niece’, and ‘brother’ or ‘sister’ equally designate cousins. Examples can be taken in the Ssô language where the word “Gnângueu” refers at the same time to mother and to aunt. The words ‘Ndoûm’ and ‘Miâng’ designate at the same time a brother, a sister and cousins. This means that to Ssô people in Cameroon, parental degree plays a meaningless role. Thus the Cameroonian family is actually a system of families. A single child has many mothers and fathers even in monogamous families, because polygamy is a deeply rooted reality in the Cameroonian family picture. We therefore cannot only focus the nuclear family concept to understand the Cameroonian family system. Cameroonian parents in Berlin try to maintain this model of “social” family in having strong ties between African fellows. Their focus must be on social groups they have, since the notion of family is not biological but a social concept (Ezembe 2008).

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<sup>3</sup> There are over 280 different mother tongues in Cameroon, but official languages now are English and French. By Cameroonian languages, we mean the home languages. People questioned in the inquiry in this work belong to many different ethnical groups with different languages. We can name for example the Bafia (Bafia language), the Bassa (Bassa language), The Bami (Baguangté language), the Sso (Sso language)

The question now is to find out if roles distribution among family members in Cameroonian households can be modified because of migration:

“...sich Eltern-Kind-Beziehungen in Zuwandererfamilien aus mindestens zweierlei Gründen von jenen einheimischer Familien unterscheiden: Erstens wird die Migration mehrheitlich als Familienprojekt realisiert, womit sich die Rollen und Funktionen der Mitglieder des Familienverbandes in Abgrenzung von der als fremd empfundenen Umgebung verändern und ihnen im Vergleich zu nicht immigrierten Familien eine insgesamt höhere Bedeutung zukommt” (Butterwegge 2010: pp. 525).

### Role of the Cameroonian father

The Cameroonian father traditionally has the authority that makes him the family head, and he is responsible for all other family members. The duty of Cameroonian father is to transmit the traditional education to children so that they remain devoted to their original community. It would appear that new context is not favourable for this cultural transmission as Nauck, Clauß and Richter wrote:

“...Perfekte Transmission würde keinerlei Wandel zulassen und keinerlei Kapazität zur Anpassung an neue Situationen ermöglichen, fehlende Transmission würde dagegen koordiniertes Handeln zwischen den Generationen unmöglich machen und jede intergenerativen Solidarpotenziale zerstören. Intergenerative Transmission ist in der Migrationssituation häufig die einzige Möglichkeit, das kulturelle Erbe aus der Herkunftsgesellschaft oder eine Minoritäten-Subkultur aufrechtzuerhalten” (Bertram 2008: pp. 138)

Some fathers may be uncompromising with the cultural issue, and two scenarios are conceivable. The first scenario is that the education that children receive at home is cultural strong in the hope to trigger a negation of the German culture. In the second case, although the Cameroonian culture is the basis of education of children, Cameroonian fathers may encourage their children in their efforts to better understand the German language and the German society. In this case, fathers think that their children must fully be invested in the German society. The father-child relation and the

nephew-uncle relation are nearby the same. So any adult is de facto responsible for any child in his family networking. Traditionally, the Cameroonian father must meet the needs and ensure the protection of the family. He is responsible for harmony in the household. He is the 'head of the family'. As Parsons says about the American family: *the man takes a more instrumental role, while the woman takes a more expressive one* (Parsons and Bales 1955: 23). This assertion is also confirmed in the Cameroonian family. The father must theoretically provide for his family. For example, he should make sure that his family has a house to live in and food every day. These duties face some difficulties in practice say for instance when he is not in the capacity to work. In cases where fathers are not able to provide for their family financially, the wife with the support of the family should take over. Otherwise, the father is expected to manage the household and he traditionally has to maintain peace and order in case of polygamous family. The father has the authority to officially be the voice of his family if needed. And in case of conflict, he has the right to punish his wife according to the tradition (Nkouendjin Y. 1975). The father also has the right to choose the name of the children, which is generally a name of any of his relative. But his wife's side can exceptionally 'give' a second name to the child. In Cameroon, the father has the exclusive rights to be polygamous (Article 43 Law of 11 June 1968). Following this law, the partner has to make a choice between a polygamous and a monogamist home. This is based on the Cameroonian Customary Law. Thus, Cameroonian father has the main right to manage family inheritance. He is the person to decide on the bride price paid by the husband-to-be when his daughters get married. He has the main decision power over his children. The father has the responsibility of his children's education and health, especially when it comes to boys. He has to teach his children how to become adults. He is the one who initiates marriage negotiations for his children when they reach the nubile age. Those responsibilities of a Cameroonian father are not just limited to his own nuclear family. Every man is allowed to have the same priorities over any child in the clan or in social group if need be. This compound of responsibilities incumbent upon Cameroonian fathers may be lightened in the German context in Cameroonian households in Berlin. Polygamy being forbidden in Germany, it strikes a big difference between a Cameroonian family in Berlin and a Cameroonian family back home, in context where Cameroonian parents grew up. Cameroonian women discreetly support men in their role

as father, when they latter fail to be up to expectations as far as their natural duties are concerned.

### Role of the Cameroonian mother

The mother-child relation is the one existing between a woman and any child in the clan. A Married woman should naturally obey, remain faithful, and follow and support her husband in his decision. Her duty is to be a housewife and take care of the children. The law provides the wife with the right to complain to her family, or to return to her parents if she is abused. And in case of separation, the woman is entitled to alimony for herself and a maintenance allowance for the children from her husband. Cameroonian mothers have the obligation to feed the children and particularly take care of them in case of sickness. A mother should take care of their children and ensure they have a home and an education, especially when they are girls. They should teach them how to be a good mother and a good wife. The mother plays the main advisory role for all children in her family circle. Every woman is considered as a mother, and respected as such. She plays a decisive role behind the scenes. Mothers keep the cohesion of all family members, and always protect the interest of her offspring.

### Duties of Cameroonian children

Beyond the fact that they are descendants, children are considered as gifts from God in Cameroonian families. According to the Cameroonian Doctor in Psychology, Ferdinang Ezembé, African families acknowledge with difficulty own personality to children. A Cameroonian child is considered not to have own identity in the family. The Cameroonian child is a particular member in family and plays a very passive role. Cameroonian children have the obligation to respect and to obey their biological parents and all other adults in the social community. They are considered to be under the responsibility of any adult in the family and must respect them all. The main duty of children is reduced on helping the family in domestic chores because their opinion does not matter and it is not taken into account as long as they are children. No matter the age of the child, duties of Cameroonian children remain the same in the household: *in the entire availability of children to help parents and elders* (Tchegho 2002: p.72-73).

Helping here would only mean participation in house chores, which is a limited involvement of children in the family life. Children interviewed in this research have better chances to express themselves in the family in comparison to this role of children in traditional Cameroonian households. The size of Cameroonian families investigated in Berlin is very small in comparison to families in Cameroon and this allows children to have a better communication relationship with their parents. Furthermore, Cameroonian parents in Berlin only have few children to care of, and this enable them to better develop a new kind of relationship with their children. They can better hear of their children. This is the reason why it can be said that Cameroon households in Berlin try to adapt to the German context. Since according to the experience of Cameroonian parents in Berlin, there is much more communication between parents and children in Cameroonian families Berlin than in Cameroon.

### 3. 2. To understand the Concept of *family* in some Cameroonian languages

As Alber and Häberlein wrote: “Family is a word that, like kinship, does not exist in...West African languages in the same sense that it does in Euro-American context” (Bertram 2012: pp.486)

The perception of realities has a direct link with the cultural background of people. For example: language plays a very important role in the way people understand the world. Language is the main component of culture, and culture has a strong influence on language (Hämmig 2000: pp. 53). Language plays a very important role in Cameroonian families since language is a system for the expression of thoughts, feelings, emotions, ideas etc. by the use of spoken sounds or conventional symbols. That is the reason why this work will draw some of examples from the Cameroonian languages concerned to clearly show the way Cameroonian families perceive child poverty. Concepts are mental images or abstract ideas in the minds that determine how people perceive things. And concepts are mental abstractions (Ruane J.M., 2004).

The first language analysed in this research is the Ssô language. Cameroon is a Country in the western part of central Africa and it is called “Africa in miniature” due to its wide cultural diversity. The Ssô people are one among the over 286 different linguistic groups

living in Cameroon. Most ethnic groups in Cameroon have similarities with each other and can be classified under few umbrella groups. Therefore, the Ssô people in Cameroon are closer to the Éwondo in the central region, to the Ngoûmbaa in the littoral region, to the Maka in the eastern region and to the Fang people in the south neighbouring Gabon and Congo (Brazzaville). The Ssô language is one of the languages spoken in the central part of Cameroon. Ssô people are said to originate from the pygmies that are found in many African countries. To understand the concept of family as Ssô people do, it was important to literally translate some idioms from the Ssô language.

The second language that we shall analyse in this research is the 'Bafias' language. Bafia people call themselves in their language 'Bekpag' and they come from the Mbam-et-Inoubou region in the North part of the central province in Cameroon. The Bafia and the Ssô languages belong to the Bantu group of languages in Africa. The Bafia language has 27 consonants and 11 vowels. Since the literal translation of some Bafia idioms shows some similarities with the Ssô languages, both languages belong to the big African ethnical group of Bantu and they are considered as the rain forest people just like the pygmies do in Africa. Bafia's and Ssô's cultures and languages are very close to those of many other communities in Africa<sup>4</sup>. These languages are similar to those of such ethnic groups as Babenzi, Akowa, Babenga, Barimba, Betsi who belong to the ethnic groups of Pygmy's and Bantou found in the Democratic Republic of Congo, in the Republic of Congo, in Gabon and in Cameroon. Other Cameroonian cultures are also considered as relating to the Ssô and the Bafia, like the Bakas in the ethnic group of Pygmy in Cameroon and Gabon, and the Bakweri in the Bantu's ethnic group from the south-west part of Cameroon. The Bantu Migrations are believed to have originated about 2,000 years ago from east-southern of Cameroon. These people live close to the rain forest and have a particular connection with nature. Besides the same ethnic groups they have significant linguistic similarities. The African historian Joseph Ki-Zerbo admits that there are many 'Africas' but there is only one "Negro- African civilisation"<sup>5</sup>. It means that African ethnical groups were originally similar by their traditions although they can be some differences. Many languages are very similar in Africa, and we can say that various African cultures have similar understanding of life. One aspect that is similar in many

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<sup>4</sup> Example of the « Fan » in Gabon, or the Pygmies in the Democratic Republic of Congo, in the Republic of Congo and in Equatorial Guinea

<sup>5</sup> Ki- Zerbo, Joseph. *Le Monde Africain Noir: Histoire et civilisation*. (Paris): Hatier, 1963.

black African cultures is the place devoted to children. This research does not perpetuate to describe the acceptance of children all over Africa by taking the case study of Ssô and of Bafia peoples in Cameroon. But this research asserts that conception of children and family of Ssô and of Bafia people reflect the reality in the former black Africa understanding as observed by Joseph Ki- Zerbo. As a consequence, children are originally very important for Cameroonian people and they are considered as the wealth of the community as it is the case in all ‘original black African’ mind-set.

“La langue maternelle est la langue parlée par l’enfant dans son environnement immédiat, hérité de ses parents; c’est la langue de sa mère et, dans la plupart des cas, des autres membres de la famille proche” (Bonnet- falandry 2004: P. 130)  
[*The mother tongue spoken by a child in his direct context is coming from his parents; it is the language of his mother, and in many cases, it is the language of many close relatives*]

The mother tongue is the language spoken by children in their closed environment. This is because a child stays most of time with his mother. The language that children speak influences their world vision depending on value set of this language. In this work the mother tongue is considered to be the language spoken at home with children. In Cameroonian families in Berlin, the language used for communication is their mother tongue although many children with Cameroonian background cannot speak it properly. And they prefer to communicate in German, even within the family.

The translation of some Cameroonian idioms will help understand how Cameroonian conception of child poverty is. After interviewing four Cameroonian children and four Cameroonian parents in Berlin, it is clear that the concept of child poverty does not exist in their mother tongue and their perception of family is based on their own mother tongues. Some examples can be taken in order to try to break through the Cameroonian perception of life. Idioms and concepts in following table were translated in very literally way in order to just focus on what their representations look like in the Cameroonian households.



Table 6: Translation of two Cameroonian languages: Ssô and Bafia

English and Ssô languages			English and Bafia Languages		
English	Ssô	Literal translation	English	Bafia	Literal translation
MARRIAGE	BÂ (from BIÂ)	–	MARIAGE	RIWÊ (from RIYÊ)	-
TO GIVE BIRTH	BIÂ	–	TO GIVE BIRTH	RIYÊ	-
TO GET MARRIED	KEU BÂ (GO FOR MAKE BORN)	“GO TO MAKE CHILDREN”	GET MARRIED	AKÊU RIWÊ (GO TO MAKE CHILDREN)	“GO TO MAKE CHILDREN”
CHILD	MOUANEÛ	“SMALLNESS”	CHILD	MAN	“A HUMAN”
FAMILY	NGOUÊ BOUROU	“HOME OF PEOPLE”	FAMILY	BOÛM BÊM	“MY PEOPLE”
POVERTY	MEU BVEUÂ	“THE CALLINGS”	POVERTY	KESSOUA	LACK OF LOVE/ AFFECTION & MEANS
WEALTH	BVEÛM	“THE MULTITUDE”	WEALTH	IKOÛM	“MULTITUDE”

Source: Self-made table

Ps: There is no word in the Ssô & in the Bafia languages for ‘uncle’ or ‘aunt’, or ‘cousin’

In this table, idioms or concepts are given in English first, and then same concept is given in a Cameroonian language (Ssô and Bafia), before their literal translation is given. This means that the way they are given, words in Ssô and in Bafia languages have other underlying meanings. Words in Cameroonian language are not only words, but they express some facts of life in Cameroonian families. For example, the word ‘marriage’ in the Ssô language is ‘Bâ’, and it comes from ‘Biâ’ that means to give birth. For Ssô people, to get married (‘Keu Bâ’) means ‘to go and give birth’. It also functions in the same way in the Bafia language where marriage is ‘Riwê’, that comes from ‘Riyê’ (to give birth). And for Bafia people also, to get married means to ‘go and give birth’. Through both Cameroonian languages, it is clear and sound that for the Ssô and the Bafia people getting married boils down to quitting your family and relatives to enter a new family in order to give birth as a consequence. For this reason, it is not conceivable for these people to imagine a marital union without children.

In the same way, the word family for Ssô people is 'Ngouê Bourou', that means literally the 'home of people'. For Ssô people, the family automatically means a home full of people. For Bafia people, the world family means 'my people'. And for Bafia people, the family refers to close relatives, and there is no need referring to blood ties. If we take the example of the word poverty, it is 'Meu Bveuâ' in the Ssô language, which means the 'Callings'. For Ssô people, someone who is poor is an object calling for help and attention, for care and love. And for Bafia people, the word poverty is 'Kessoua', which refers to the lack of love or affection. For Bafia people, poverty means lack of people to love, or lack of someone to bring affection.

These examples were taken, to make it clear that, the way concepts can be understood in German does not necessarily have anything to do with the way these Cameroonian people convey them. Cameroonian parents in Berlin attach huge importance to their mother tongue, and they endeavour to transmit their cultural values to their children in Berlin. These values are reflected in their languages, this is the reason why literal translation of important concepts was necessary to begin to understand in which environment Cameroonian children live in their households in Berlin.

### 3. 3. Life in Cameroonian households in Berlin

Cameroonian parents interviewed for this research all grew up in their home country before moving for long term to Germany. As it is the case with other migrants groups who grew up in their homeland, Cameroonian adults who moved to Germany are very strongly rooted in their original culture, and they strive to enjoy this culture in their households in Germany. Geißler acknowledged the following:

"Die meisten Ausländer, die als Erwachsene ins Land kamen, wollen in ihrer Kultur und Tradition weiterleben. Ihre Bindung an die dort herrschenden Werte und Vorstellungen ist lange gewachsen und ist stark" (Geißler 1982: pp. 69).

Children with Cameroonian background in Berlin also experiment this claim of the culture of origin of their parents in the way they live in the family.

## Children and culture in Cameroonian families in Berlin

The children with Cameroonian background interviewed in this research live and experience two different cultures simultaneously. They were able to identify the Cameroonian culture within their life in family. And they were also able to fit in the German social context at the same time. The interviewed children stated the following:

Interview with son of Family Atangana, 16 years old, A1

[L94-114]: *„Eine Seite habe ich so...die kamerunische Kultur Leben und so was, zu Hause so ein bisschen...wenn man nach Hause kommt ist es teilweise auch mehr afrikanisch. Und da gelten auch mehr afrikanische Regeln als europäische. Und wie Tante A3. sagt: das ist ihr „Makak“ (Dorf südlich Kameruns) hier zu Hause. Und da gelten die Regeln, wie in Makak auch. Was ich manchmal auch nicht verstehe, sie kann auch lockerer sein [Augen gerollt...hmmm] aber gut! Und hmm, [...] ach ja, Makak ist ein kleines Dorf in Kamerun, ich glaube das ist zwischen Yaoundé und Douala. [Hmmm...] Und zu den Regeln also, z.B. wenn die Familie zusammen kommt, dann ist es immer so eine Sache, also da rasten die Leute immer voll aus. Also zum Beispiel kamerunische Regeln oder Sinn oder Kultur. [Hmmm...] Kultur ist zum Beispiel, wenn wir zusammen kommen, dann also schreien alle die ganze Zeit rum, meine Tanten alle, sind nur am laut reden aber sie sitzen 20 Zentimeter voneinander. Ja, lachen laut oder schreien sich laut an, oder am Telefon völlig überflüssig, schreit sich ins Telefon, und sind nur am laut lachen [...] und dies das. Und das kann auch ein bisschen nerven, wenn man das nicht so gewöhnt ist. Na ja, es ist halt so. Und, oder zum Beispiel, typischer Regel für meine Tante ist, wenn sie redet, darf man nicht noch Mal diskutieren oder so. Das, also das gibt in deutschen Familien überhaupt nicht“*

Interview with daughter of Family Bitchoga, 14 years old, B1

[L34-37]: *„[...] meistens fühle ich mich Deutsch aber nicht wenn ich schon mit meiner Familie bin. Und meistens [Lächeln] Ja, ich komme aus Kamerun, weil, [hmmm] es gibt halt so kulturelle Unterschiede und so. [Hmmm] Essen, Kleidung und so, und dann, und da merke ich da halt auch bei manchen Situationen, dass ich auch aus Kamerun komme“.*

“Die Kinder der MigrantInnen sind mit anderen Problemen bei ihrem Erwachsenwerden konfrontiert, als es bei der Elterngeneration noch der Fall war. Es sind häufig Probleme, die den Eltern fremd sind, für die es keine tradierten Verhaltensmuster mehr gibt und deren Lösungsmöglichkeiten sie zum Großteil Ablehnend gegenüberstehen” (Viehböck & Bratic 1994: pp. 95)

Cameroonian families in Berlin make tremendous efforts to raise their children according to their traditions. Cameroonian parents grew up in Cameroon, and they have a very strong cultural background. To better understand the place of a child in the Cameroonian family in Berlin, we need to specify what the Cameroonian culture is. In the Cameroonian culture as well as in the *original Black African* conception, a child is a shared property in the community. Bamiléké people in Cameroon consider that a child belongs to his mother when she is pregnant, because after birth, a child is a common property to the community (Tchegho 2002, p. 76). Children are educated to be able to live in such a community and not to live only with their biological parents. A Cameroonian child belongs to the group, its education is the common responsibility of its biological parents together with all adults living in the group or in the community. For instance the Téké community in the south of Congo consider the natural father as a more or less casual person in the matrilineal family. The child belongs to the whole clan. The father is an accompanying adult and the maternal uncle is the real custodian of its education. This model also exists among the Bakongo people from Congo, the Haoussa people from West Africa in North of Nigeria, Ivory Coast, Togo and Benin; the Akan people from Ghana, West Africa, and the Bamenda people from the North-West part of Cameroon, and the Bochimans people from Southern Africa in the Kalahari desert also consider this value this in their cultural set of values. From now on, the use of the standard concept of ‘*African culture*’ in this work will refer to realities which can be found in two or three other different African ethnic group since many values are very similar to various African groups. In short, *culture* as a concept in this research includes its use in social sciences and humanities.

Culture as a concept finds its source in Cicero’s *Tusculan Disputations* where he talks about *cultura animi* for cultivation or development of the philosophical spirit. The

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) *broadly* defines culture as “*the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group*” (UNESCO 26 July-6 August 1982). This research will henceforth adopt the UNESCO definition of culture and the generic concept of *African culture* shall mostly be used. We consider that all experiences and teachings that define and identify Black African communities can better clarify the perception of child poverty by Cameroonian parents.

Cameroonian parents in Berlin are transmitted many of their traditional values to their children through the language. They use to communicate with their children at home in their mother only, because this is a very important element of their culture. As Nauck, Clauß and Richter stated:

“Sprache ist weiterhin das zentrale Medium, mit dem Sozialbeziehungen geknüpft, unterhalten und ausgebaut werden. Entsprechend ist die fehlende Beherrschung mindestens der jeweiligen Umgangssprache mit fehlenden Möglichkeiten der Sozialintegration und der Entwicklung von sozialem Kapital verbunden” (Bertram 2008: pp. 139).

For many Cameroonian parents in Berlin, the mother tongue is the first cultural element they want to safeguard in the education they give to their children. This language of communication in many Cameroonian households is the way parents nest home country values and customs since the children learn German at school, and that these children will have no other opportunity to learn these Cameroonian languages:

“Ein Hauptmechanismus des *Erhalts der Herkunftssprache* besteht darin, dass in der Herkunftsfamilie diese Sprache zur Kommunikation zwischen Eltern und Kindern und unter den Geschwistern benutzt wird” (Bertram 2008: pp. 140).

The Cameroonian children interviewed in this research were not able to fluently speak the mother tongue of their parents, but they could interestingly understand these Cameroonian languages. The Cameroonian parents interviewed in this research speak their mother tongue with their children at home, but the children mostly respond in

German. The language is the first vehicle of a culture, and the first barrier to the Cameroonian cultural education in Berlin. But there are linguistic gaps between children and their parents.

Cameroonian families strive to uphold the African family formula, and undertake to transmit this to their children. Cameroonian families are also religious. Paugam also thinks that family and religious values reinforce each other. The value system of some Cameroonian communities is based on shared values. In this way, people with low incomes do not feel poor and people with high wages can feel important member in the group only in as much as they support the needy. In this way, poverty is seen as the wealth of some people, just because those who are considered to be rich have the moral duty to assist those in need. The rehabilitation of poverty consists in perceiving it as a positive value, an opportunity to show solidarity between people in same community. Here, the first step is to disregard money, and consider that ownership is illusory. The strong link of Cameroonian parents to their culture cannot be transmitted as such to their children born and brought up in Germany. Cameroonian children in Berlin don't have the same strong feeling of belonging to the Cameroonian culture as their parents do. And for this reason they are confronted with identity "crisis" within the German society. This leads to many conflicts that young Cameroonians in Germany have to permanently deal with. These cultural and identity problems are permanent in the life of Cameroonian children in Berlin. It can however be stated that the transmission of some cultural values has been successful. The Cameroonian family always stands together and this value of solidarity is efficiently transmitted to Cameroonian children in Berlin by their parents. The leitmotiv of Cameroonians seems then to be: to bring together many people for a collective enrichment (Têvoêdjê 1978: pp.141).

### Residence status of Cameroonian migrants in Berlin

Most Cameroonian migrants in Berlin belong to the first migrant generation, and most of them have little children. This new migration group has an average stay of 5,5 years in Germany (Statistisches Bundesamt 2009). A good number of migrant with Cameroonian background live in Berlin. Berlin is the capital city of Germany and has many graduate schools and better job opportunities, which might be the reasons why

Cameroonians are concentrated in this city. Another reason can also be the fact that Cameroonian people like to live in metropolitan areas. A major percentage of Cameroonian nationals to Germany were students when they migrated to Germany. The Cameroonian migration to Germany probably has other motivations and explanations, but it is basically an economical migration. Almost all Cameroonian people who live in Germany now migrated because they could not have better opportunities and perspectives in Cameroon. The Cameroonian migrants in Berlin travelled to Germany looked for better life conditions, and they can be categorised in three different source groups: study, family reunification and asylum. Despite the language barrier, Cameroonian migration to Germany is increasing in numbers. The information needed to migrate to Germany is transmitted through friends, relatives or other networking.

The decision to come to Germany is not an individual decision for Cameroonian people. In almost all scenarios, with some exceptions, this decision is a collective decision in Cameroonian families. Some families put the necessary financial means together to be able to pay for the flight and all fees resulting from such an undertaking. This is one of the reasons why Cameroonian people in Germany are always under high pressure from their family left behind in Cameroon. They have to respect the solidarity contract that exists with their relatives in Cameroon. The hope of their relatives at home is that they financially support the rest of the family later on. For this reason, the choice of the person who should migrate is made on the basis of some characteristics. The person 'chosen' for migration to look for a better life for the community abroad, must be ambitious, hardworking, generous, grateful, respectful, and loyal to the community. Other characteristics may play a role in this decision, the concern is that the one who 'travels' should help improving the economic situation of the family left back in Cameroon. Having a legal stay in Germany is an important issue for Cameroonian people in Berlin. They have many challenges to take up, such as feeding their own children, and remitting financial support to relatives left back home. All Cameroonian parents interviewed for the purpose of this research have some dependent relatives at home to take care of.

Cameroonian asylum seekers in Germany are recognized as political refugees. Germany grants up to 4 Cameroonians the political refugee status each year (Schmelz

2007 : pp.8). This new status enables them to legally stay in Germany, and many of the eventually choose to permanently settle in Berlin.

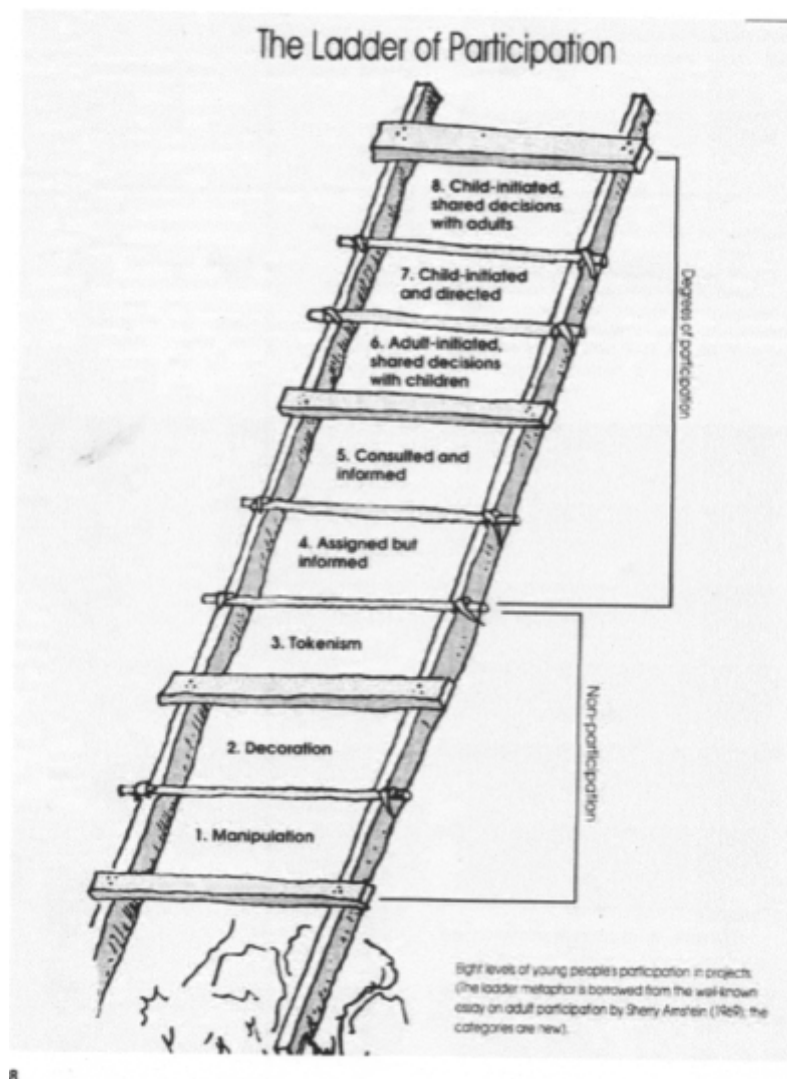
The intention of Cameroonian families to stay in Germany on a long-term basis is clearly manifested by the way they are organised. Some Cameroonian migrants are engaged with German partners to set up a home and start a family with the intention to settle in their new "home". They help their family members to come and join them by introducing the family entry and settlement. This means that they consider their life in Germany as a lasting adventure, and not a temporary or punctual action. Even though the residence status of the first Cameroonian migrant generation in Germany was on a limited time span, with the arrival of their children, they view their stay in Germany differently than before and manifest the desire to definitely settle their new permanent home in Germany. The second generation of Cameroonian migrants in Germany are not confronted with visa related issues like the previous generations did. All children with Cameroonian background are either German citizen, or have a legal long visa to stay in Germany. This is one of the reasons why the first generation of Cameroonian immigrants in Germany have problems feeling part and parcel of the German society. The second generation on the other hand better identifies and better fits in the German social life, since most of them can speak German without an accent just like native speakers. The children interviewed in this research think and feel like they are *Berliners* or *Germans*, which is absolutely not the case with their parents.

### Participation of Cameroonian children in two different cultures

The participation can be defined as "The process of sharing decisions which affect one's life and the life of the community in which one lives" (Hart 1992: pp. 5).



Picture 1: The ladder of participation



Source: Hart, 1992: pp.8

Cameroonian children in Berlin browse between two worlds. They experience Cameroonian culture in their households with their parents, and they interact with German culture outdoors with friends, schoolmates or neighbours. Many Cameroonian children were born in Germany, and most of them belong to the second migrant generation.

A majority of their parents belong to first generation of Cameroonians who immigrated to Germany for some years. These parents grew up in Cameroun and they have strong cultural roots. This appears in the way they strive to educate and bring up their children.

Culture is a very important aspect for Cameroonian parents in Berlin. They try to transmit understanding of Cameroonian cultural practices to their children. Some of them try to create an emotional tie between their children and the relatives left at home by travelling there with their children for vacations, or keeping in touch on phone or through internet. All Cameroonian parents involved in this research were members of at least an African cultural groups in Berlin. They all felt the need to find another 'home' in Germany. For immigrant children of Cameroonian descent having both experiences at the same time, a traditional life according to the Cameroonian culture at home, and a 'German' life outdoors, the dilemma is worrisome. They can decide to adopt their own personality and way of life in accordance to the culture of their parent's home country. The problem with this choice is that they may not integrate in the German society because as they will not feel as being part of it. In case the Cameroonian children decide to embrace the German way of life, their cultural background would be neglected and thus losing their culture. Cameroonian children have to make this choice if they want to clearly position themselves in the society. It is very important for the Cameroonians to remain loyal to their culture, and always keep the solidarity chain with the relatives at home. In many cases, young people are not able to make a choice between these two universes which are both new and strange to them. It is for this reason that many Cameroonian children living in Berlin are faced with identity related issues. Immigrant Cameroonian children cannot live the Cameroonian culture as such in Berlin. They cannot sufficiently acclaim or identify with the African culture. Häming rightly described this talking about the second generation of migrants in Switzerland:

“Die erste Generation (von den ausgewanderten) ist und bleibt noch im Heimatland bzw. in der Heimatkultur verwurzelt, wogegen die Zweite Generation vielmehr entwurzelt ist, in gewissem Sinne in der 'Fremde' lebt und dabei gleichzeitig keine eigentliche Heimat mehr hat” (Hämig 2000: pp.34).

According to Hämig, the second generation of migrants is more rooted in the culture in which they reside. The first generation of migrants is still living according to the culture in their home country. This phenomenon is visible in Cameroonian households in Berlin because parents are very focused on maintaining their culture and they try to impose their cultural context at home, and their children are more oriented to outdoor life and to

German context. But these children can clearly make a difference between these both realities they have to deal with. The example of 16 years old son in family Atangana can be taken:

Interview with son of Family Atangana, 16 years old, A1

[L96-99]: „*An der Schule ist es ganz anders als zu Hause. Immer [...] immer so zu sagen zwischen zwei Welten. Wenn man in die Schule kommt ist es immer Europäer europäisch, wenn man nach Hause kommt ist es teilweise auch mehr afrikanisch*“

Cameroonian children are not faced with same situation as their parents in Berlin do. They do not really feel like people who left their ‘home country’ and live abroad like their parents do. In a nutshell, Cameroonian children doesn’t feel like an immigrants in Germany as such. Cameroonian children interviewed for this research work had no concrete African experiences to better enjoy their life within their household in the German context. Their parents were their only tie to the Cameroonian culture. For this reason, it can be said that they are uprooted from their African background. And oddly, they feel like they are more at home in Germany. Many Cameroonian parents have settled in Germany while keeping in mind the option of eventually going back home. This notion does not apply to their children. Most Cameroonian children in Berlin have no concrete connections to Cameroon. Children interviewed here keep on dangling between different worlds because their parents are fighting to make them feel attached the Cameroonian culture. Many of them feel that the need to fit into the German society is stronger than the desire to embrace their parent’s culture. And yet, if they are to earn a living, succeed in life, it will only be in the German setting that is shaping their personality. According to Hämmig:

“Die erste Generation stellt sich auf einen bloß vorübergehenden Aufenthalt im Einwanderungsland ein und akzeptiert ihre strukturelle Unterprivilegierung im Hinblick auf ihre geplante Remigration in ihr Heimatland und in Erwartung der dortigen Statuserhöhung eher. Die zweite Generation dagegen hat eine ganz andere Zukunftsperspektive, stellt sich auf einen längeren oder gar dauernden Verbleib im Gastland ein, orientiert sich an den hiesigen strukturellen bzw. sozioökonomischen Verhältnissen und fühlt sich bei gleichzeitig wahrgenommener struktureller Benachteiligung entsprechend diskriminiert und

relativ depriviert. Abgesehen davon leben viele Angehörige der zweiten Generation aufgrund der Remigrationsabsicht der Eltern in ständiger Aufenthaltsunsicherheit und in einem permanenten Loyalitäts- und Identitätskonflikt” (Hämmig 200: pp. 36).

Cameroonian children in Berlin face identity challenges in Berlin. For sure, they do not identify with the Cameroonian community in Berlin at large as their parents do.

“Der Kontakt mit der Heimat ist nicht nur aus kulturellen oder sozialen Gründen wichtig. Einer der Hauptgründe, weshalb Migranten nach Deutschland kommen, ist der, die Menschen zu Hause finanziell zu unterstützen” (McIntyre & al. 2004: pp.135)

The Cameroonian parents in Germany targeted in this research were a very recent migrant group born in their home country. They came to Germany for a better life, and they tried to integrate in the German society as successfully as they can. They were however very much influenced by their cultural background because they grew up in their home country setting. The perception of child poverty is different in the Cameroonian context compared to the German one where they decide to live and bring up their children. Cameroonian children in Berlin receive a pseudo-Cameroonian education from their parents in the German context. The question is to know how Cameroonian young people deal with an African education in a European context. How do the Cameroonian values impact the life of Cameroonian children Berlin? To better retrace the perception of child poverty in Cameroonian families in Berlin, it will be necessary to get in the heart of the Cameroonian family and then analyse the African culture that influences the way Cameroonian people think and reason.

The first important point in order to understand how Cameroonian people perceive child poverty is to keep in mind that, neither financial considerations, nor material goods play an important role. This research focuses on Cameroonian families in Berlin and considers the culture within which Cameroonian parents grew up in. This culture seems to have any impact on their children lifestyles in Berlin. It was important to describe the

Cameroonian socio-cultural context first. To understand some Cameroonian attitudes in Berlin, it is necessary to understand in which context Cameroonian parents grew up in. Georg Simmel well interpreted how social life functions in poor contexts with his *integrated poverty notion*. Simmel described well a poverty context, like it used to be in Cameroon. This research being based on the Capability approach, we need to explain the integrated poverty notion by Georg Simmel to better understand the background which Cameroonian parents grew up in. Simmel suggests that poverty be approached according to its place in the social structure. The correlation between society and poor people is determinant for the social condition and the daily experience of the “poor”. According to him, three forms of poverty can be distinguished: the integrated, the marginal and the disqualifying poverty. Poor people represent just a small group of a society in case of marginal poverty. They are considered as unable to follow the industrial development and they are seen like the system failure because they are unable to fit in the society. This scenario is mostly the case in advance industrial states and those in expansion.

The disqualifying poverty is more about exclusion than poverty. The group of poor people becomes larger and they are “the excluded” and represent the new social class. In such a context people are afraid to fall in this stigmatized category.

The integrated poverty is the first poverty category and is assimilated to the traditional form. This form of poverty is more adapted to developing countries. In case, we have so many poor people in the society that, one can hardly make a distinction between one social level and the other. Poverty is a common situation, thus people and social debate focus on economic development. Poor people are not stigmatised as *underclass* because of their numbers. Despite their low living standards, poor people are integrated in the organised social networking as family, friend or community. The parallel economy plays a very important role in such a context. Paugam sustained that poverty is a cyclical problem in countries in Northern Europe and a structural problem in Southern Europe (Paugam 2005 : pp.105). According to him, poverty remains stable in the south over time so that it reproduces from generation to generation: “*the traditional poverty*”. And the integration of poverty is both social and religious: poverty is integrated socially and religiously.

“...Falling wages and higher unemployment might also create added strains on marital stability, thereby increasing child poverty. Of course, in low-wage countries, the effects of globalization on child poverty might be quite positive, as increased employment and wages would directly improve children’s standard of living, while also raising public revenue available for social programmes” (Cornia & Danziger 1997: pp.3)

Cameroonian parents invest on their children with a long-term view, because they want their children to earn a better living and get better opportunities than they could do, and then to keep on maintaining the family. Cameroonian parents grew up in a poor context without social security, and the investment on children is the best way to ensure their own future livelihood. For this reason, Cameroonian parents want to transmit this mindset to their children. But Cameroonian children in Berlin are growing up in a totally different environment making them to apprehend this issue less seriously. The perception of child poverty of Cameroonian parent in Berlin reflects the poverty described by Simmel. They live their poverty differently from people in Germany. Cameroonian parents like to share what they have with their relatives with the hope that they will eventually harvest this for their children.

### 3. 4. Partial conclusion

This research is a mere attempt to combine the Capability Approach with the African culture through the Cameroonian culture viewpoint. This is an application of the Capability Approach to the Cameroonian cultural values in Cameroonian households in Berlin. To have an accurate understanding of the Capability Approach, it is necessary to underscore its focus points. The main points involved in the Capability Approach are the Capability and the functioning. A person’s Capability is “defined as the various combinations of functionings (beings and doings) that the person can achieve” (Sen 1992: pp.40). To this degree, the person’s capability reflects his/her freedom or her (real) opportunities. Functionings are “the various things a person may value as being and doing” (Sen 1999: pp.75). Capability and functioning remain intimately connected

but independently useful: “Because capability is a collection of functionings a person can achieve, capability is evaluated in the ‘space’ of functionings, thus functionings are integral elements of capabilities” (Comin & al. 2008, pp.3). The agency was the third core concept developed by Sen. An agent is “someone who acts and brings about a change” (Sen 1999: pp.19); the agency aspect is also important in assessing “what a person is free to do and to achieve in pursuit of whatever goals or values s/he regards as important” (Sen 1985: pp.203) but this research will mostly focus on the functionings that make up the capabilities of children with Cameroonian background in Berlin.

The notion of Capability includes a strong self-determination. In our case study for example we are out to find out if children with a Cameroonian background feel free to fulfil their dreams for a better future life in Berlin. For instance, the functionings of being able to speak and the functioning of having a good command of the German language make the Capability of a good language skill for children with a Cameroonian background in Berlin. This means that the ability to speak is a basic ability for human beings combined with the ability to master the German language as native speakers in the German context makes Cameroonian children in Berlin to have the Capability to get very performant language skills which are crucial to succeed in Germany.

In the same way the functionings to get the solidarity value from the family and be able to go out and meet friends, involves good social connections as a Capability; these are two very important and usefull assets that children with Cameroonian background in Berlin have freely developed over the years. It is a combination of both, their family life, and their social interaction outdoor.

“Ballet et al. (2010) have pointed out how sen’s approach encompasses the idea of the importance of self-determination, especially when it distinguishes between well-being freedom and agency freedom” (Andreson & al. 2010: pp. 83)

The self-determination also introduces the concept of individual life. But the way Cameroonian parents bring up their children in Berlin helps them to have a collective approach towards the group. The decision-making process should include the entire

family to preserve the cohesion of the community because this has been a relayed through generations, and children must keep the ritual alive:

“Among the ancient Aryan-speaking people, the family was undoubtedly in the first place a community of cult. It was founded on marriage, and the aim of marriage was to produce legitimate progeny which could perpetuate the ancestral cult and thus ensure the continued existence of the family” (Westrup 1934: pp. 5)

The children at stake in this research work experience two very different cultural influences and the question is to know in which cultural background they will base their actions. As Andresen stated: “It is not enough to ask people what they need in order to give them a democratic voice. What they utter as needs should always be analysed as being embedded in social structures” (Andresen & al. 2010: pp.71). It depends on which culture Cameroonian children want to base their future life. They can decide to keep the way of thinking of their parents in which solidarity obligation plays a central role. Or they may decide not to adopt this viewpoint, and concentrate more in their life as individual and not necessarily include the group in their future perspective. As Bertram stated: “Individualismus ist zumindest in unseren europäischen Kulturen notwendigerweise eine Folge der Investitionen in die individuelle Entwicklung der kindlichen Persönlichkeit” (Bertram 1997: pp.11).

If children with Cameroonian background in Berlin consider their life as a common issue to be shared with their families, this can imply that their Capabilities are the same with those of their families. This also means that if they improve on their Capabilities, this would enhance the Capabilities of the family. But this may appear difficult because it is not clear which impact parents’s culture may have on the Capabilities of such children. Taking the language skill issue in Cameroonians households in Berlin, it seems children with Cameroonian background in Berlin who took part of this investigation can perfectly master the German, language, while their parents could not. In the interviews made for this research, the children were comfortable and articulate in German, but their parents choose to speak either English or in French. The questions



raised here is to know whether the language skill of Cameroonian children in Berlin can improve on the language skill of their entire family in Berlin.

In social issues, the Capacity of Cameroonian children to have friends does not depend on their parents. Children with Cameroonian background in Berlin have more social connections outside the family in Berlin than their parents do. As the thirteen years old son of family Deumaga said:

Interview with son of Family Deumaga, 13 years old, D1

[L69-70]: *„Ich habe auch viele Freunde. Und, die sind halt nett zu mir, und...ohne meine Freunde, glaube ich, wäre ich nicht so weit gekommen wie jetzt“*

And the mother of family Bitchoga, aged thirty nine had a completely another opinion, because she had no social contacts:

Interview with mother of Family Bitchoga, 39 years old, B2

[L 66]: *„[...] You still don't feel like this is not where you belong“*

It would appear that Cameroonian children feel more comfortable in Germany than their parents. They feel free to have the social life they like in Berlin while their parents on the other hand don't. The reason might be that in comparison to their parents, children with Cameroonian background are more open-minded. They do not have this strong tie with their Cameroonian roots as their parents do, and they feel free in Germany to have friends from other horizons. But for Cameroonian parents, it might be that a friendship is only possible with other Cameroonian people, or at best with other African families. The friendship between Cameroonian parents and people from other culture can be problematic for Cameroonian parents in Berlin are too much focused on their culture. But these networks of Cameroonian parents in Berlin can play an important role for their children. According to Butterwege:

“Im frühen Kindesalter sind die Kontakte mit der Kernfamilie zwar noch die wichtigsten; ab einem Alter von drei Jahren nehmen Freundschaften unter Kindern jedoch zu. Dabei erfüllen soziale Netzwerke im Kindesalter vielfältige Funktionen: Sie sind kognitiv, effektive und sozial anregend und dienen darüber

hinaus zur Bewältigung verschiedenster Entwicklungsaufgaben, wie etwa der Ausbildung von Sprache, Selbstwert und sozialer sowie emotionaler Kompetenz. Daneben haben auch die Verwandtschaft der Eltern (Onkel, Tanten, Cousins und Cousinen) und besonders die Großeltern in den letzten Jahren ein größeres Gewicht im Kinderalltag erlangt. Gerade Letztere übernehmen häufig Funktionen bei der Erziehung und Betreuung, wenn Mütter einer Erwerbstätigkeit nachgehen. Auch andere Erwachsene wie Freunde, Bekannte oder Nachbar (inne) n der Eltern können wichtige sozialisatorische Funktionen übernehmen” (Butterwege 2010: pp. 296)

The issue of having social connections for Cameroonian households in Berlin is a sensitive one, and it plays a major role for children with Cameroonian background: “Die Frage nach den sozialen Kontakten stellt sich im Migrationskontext ebenfalls in besonderer Weise. Freundschaften besitzen für Kinder und Jugendliche mit Migrationshintergrund eine ebenso große Bedeutung wie für deutsche: sie leisten Unterstützung bei der Bewältigung von Alltagsproblemen und Hilfe bei der Entwicklung selbstständiger Lebensformen” (Zander 2005: pp. 171)

For some authors the social poverty is related to the poverty:

“When a child or family’s socioeconomic status is in decline, the quality and frequency of social contacts usually decreases as well and, with this, the available support” (Andresen & al. 2010: pp. 168).

The reason for that may be that many poor families are any how excluded from the social life because of their poverty. Poor people cannot go out with friends and buy a drink for example. The material poverty represents the main risk of exclusion in rich nations: “Eines der zentralen Riziken materieller Armut für Menschen westlicher Wohlstandsgesellschaften ist die Gefahr, infolge Geldmangels langfristig von sozialen Kontexten ausgeschlossen zu werden” (Butterwegge 2010: pp. 297).

We need to underscore that Africans deal with their friendship circles in different way from what is observed in Germany. For African friends, the most important point is to keep in touch and not forcibly for outing sake. Many Africans who are good friends can

have phone contacts over a long time without feeling the need to go out together. But for friendship relationships in the German context, friends need to go out together. Children with Cameroonian background also have this need to often go out with friends because their friends are very important to them and play a very important role in their life. For children, friend circles play a central role for their socialisation as Bertram stated: “Die wichtigste orientierungsgruppe für die Jugendlichen sind die eigenen Freunde und Freundinnen” (Bertram 1987: pp. 13).

It is through friends that children make their orientation in life. And Cameroonian children develop their friendship circles very differently like their parents do.

“Industrialized societies are highly socially stratified, though much less than most developing countries” (Cornia and Danziger 1997: pp. 379).

Children in Cameroonian households in Berlin experience a split identity. As migrants abroad, their parents try to integrate the ‘German world’, but conversely, they try to keep their African mind lively. Therefore the perception of child poverty through their culture may affect split identity of their children. The materialistic German/ European definition of child poverty finds itself at crossroads with the African definition.

The Capabilities of children with Cameroonian background in Berlin are not left to the children alone. The perception of child poverty by Cameroonian parents has an impact to the way they breed their children. This can be seen for example in the value set they have in their households. But it can be noticed that children with Cameroonian background develop their own way to better integrate socially in Berlin.

Data collection for this research shall resort to the qualitative approach to better understand how Cameroonians perceive child poverty in Berlin, and which tie have to be made to the capabilities of Cameroonian children in Berlin.

## 4. Research Methodology

“Information on children well-being is obtained predominantly from themselves”

(Andresen & al. 2010: pp.21).

The qualitative method was the appropriate way for data collection in this work (4.1). This chapter will first present the Narrative and biographical approach of interviews done in Cameroonian households in Berlin (4.2), before giving the backstage attitudes during the process (4.3). After this, an interpretation of the data collected for this research will be made (4.4)

### 4. 1. Qualitative method of data collection in this work

Interviews with Cameroonian families were used for data collection purposes in this research. Interviews were conducted through a written questionnaire in German and were partly completed with oral open questions (Why? Why not? How?...). The Questions are neutral (*How do you feel in Germany?*) and open (*why...?*). The original interviews formulated in French or in English will be presented in original versions to avoid any translation misunderstanding. But for data sake, analysis will be necessary to translate some responses into English language to make useful the information in this work.

Some differences were noted since Cameroon families introduce nieces and nephews as their own children because those notions do not exist in their cultural conception of the family. The same was noticeable with the youth who consider their uncles and aunts are just like their own biological parents. The reason is that relatives in Cameroon are not hierarchized with so many titles and degrees like in European families, where the concept of nuclear family is prominent. Thus some Cameroonian young people talk about “their mothers” and “fathers”, or about their “brothers” and “sisters”, since the cultural concept of family in Cameroonian households is a social reality. This work provides young people with the Cameroonian background the possibility to voice out their opinion on their own lives and on perception of child poverty. The best way to execute this was interviews to give them an opportunity to tell their own story from their

view point: “Interviews geben den Befragten selbst das Wort, sie erhalten im Interview Gelegenheit, über ihre Biographie, Weltsicht, Erfahrungen und Kontexte zu berichten und machen diese Informationen damit der Forschung zugänglich” (Friebertshäuser & Prengel 1997: pp.371). A quantitative approach was chosen as the methodology to guide this work: “Dennoch spielen Interviews in der qualitativen Forschung eine zentrale Rolle” (Friebertshäuser & Prengel 1997: pp.371). The number of interviewees does not play a very important role since this research work is a qualitative one. Most important ideas can be target in only few interviews like it was the case in this research. For instance, the main objective is to grasp future Capabilities of Cameroonian children in Germany due to the conception of child poverty in Cameroonian households in Berlin.

### Data entry form

The data form used for interviews in this work was organised according to the various topics tackled in this research. Most of the questions were impersonal and open in order to give to interviewees the chance to state and to explain their own opinion with their own words. A data entry form was a very useful tool to collect data for this work: “Das zentrale Charakteristikum von Leitfaden-Interviews besteht darin, daß vor dem Interview ein Leitfaden mit vorformulierte Fragen oder Themen erarbeitet wird” (Friebertshäuser & Prengel Hrsg 1997: pp.375).

The entry form prepared for this research was addressing to Cameroonian immigrants and their children in Berlin. The entry data form was intentionally formulated in German because all people involved in the interviews were conversant with German. It was later established that Cameroonian children wish to have their interviews in the German language because they feel more comfortable in speaking German. Cameroonian parents on the other hand preferred to be interviewed in either English or French, since these both languages are official languages spoken and written in Cameroon and they grew up mastering both languages.

It was highly important for Cameroonian children and parents to give their own view point on child poverty to make this analysis coherent and meaningful. All their responses were very important, but children’s opinions were of more relevant since: “One clear reason for interviewing youth respondents is to allow them voice out their

own interpretations and thoughts rather than relying solely on adult interpretations over their lives... Another reason for interviewing young people is to study those topics that are silent in their lives but do not occur in daily conversations or interactions.” (Gubrium & Holstein 2001: pp.181).

Preparing questions for interviews seek to respond to the concern what Cameroonian children in Berlin think of their future life opportunities in Germany due to perception of child poverty in their households. Questions were simple and straightforward to avoid misunderstandings. The entry form has just one question for each topic. The language used for the questions was made in the everyday speech formula and all questions were very open (e.g: how do you thing your professional future will be?). Questions were formulated as simple as possible to ensure that the responses are as clear as possible. The questions about migration to Germany and poverty were asked at the end of the interview do not make interviewed people feel excluded from the German context, or to make them feel to be seen as “poor” right at the start of the interview. At the end, the interviews very much helped to analyse the Capabilities of Cameroonian children in Berlin.

#### Table 7: The data entry form

These questions were asked to children and parents in Cameroonian households living in Berlin, to find out which child poverty perception they have.

Forschungsfrage: Wahrnehmung der Kinderarmut	
Datum:	
Name:	
Alter:	
Geschlecht:	
Erzählaufforderung (Beispiele sind sehr erwünscht!)	
Thema: Familie	

<p>Können Sie mir bitte über Ihre Familie erzählen?</p>		
<p>Inhaltliche Aspekte (Profil der Familie)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Geschwistern</li> <li>• Beide Eltern zusammen</li> <li>• Alltägliches Familienleben</li> <li>• Entscheidungsspielräume der Kindern</li> <li>• Fürsorge für die Eltern in Zukunft</li> </ul>	<p>Aufrechterhaltungsfragen: (Soziales Leben)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wirkt sich die Lage der sozialen Kontakte der kamerunischen jungen Leute auf die Familie?</li> <li>• Was bringen Sie mit Familie gedanklich noch in Verbindung?</li> <li>• Sprechen Sie Ihre Muttersprache?</li> <li>• Gibt es sonst noch etwas?</li> <li>• Und weiter?</li> <li>• Wie ist es denn so?</li> </ul>	<p>Nachfragen:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welche Bedeutung hat ihre Familie für Sie?</li> <li>• Wie ist Ihr Familienleben in Berlin?</li> <li>• Wie würden Sie Ihre Familie beschreiben?</li> <li>• Wie würden Sie sich Ihre Familie in die Zukunft vorstellen?</li> <li>• Fällt Ihnen noch etwas ein?</li> </ul>
<p>Themen: Karriere und Zukunft</p> <p>Wie denken Sie Ihre zukünftige Karriere über?</p>		
<p>Inhaltliche Aspekte</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beruf der Eltern</li> <li>• Schule</li> <li>• Zukunft</li> <li>• Traumberuf</li> </ul>	<p>Aufrechterhaltungsfragen:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Was bringen Sie mit Karriere gedanklich noch in Verbindung?</li> <li>• Haben Sie einen Traumberuf? Wie kamen Sie darauf?</li> <li>• Gibt es sonst noch etwas?</li> <li>• Und weiter?</li> </ul>	<p>Nachfragen:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welche Bedeutung hat die Karriere für Sie?</li> <li>• Aus welchem Grund ist die Arbeit für Sie wichtig?</li> <li>• Was erwarten Sie von Ihrer Zukunft?</li> <li>• Welche Art von Arbeit &amp; welches Status wäre</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wie ist es denn so?</li> </ul>	für Sie in der Karriere richtig?
<b>Thema: Immigration</b> Hat Ihrer Umzug nach Deutschland prinzipiell etwas in Ihrem Leben geändert?		
<b>Inhaltliche Aspekte</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teilhabe an dem deutschen Sozialleben</li> <li>• Rückkehr nach der Heimat</li> <li>• Heimweh</li> </ul>	<b>Aufrechterhaltungsfragen:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wie Fühlen Sie sich Teil der deutschen Gesellschaft? Woran?</li> <li>• Was bringen Sie mit Kamerun gedanklich noch in Verbindung?</li> <li>• Gibt es sonst noch etwas?</li> <li>• Und weiter?</li> <li>• Wie ist es denn so?</li> </ul>	<b>Nachfrage:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beschreiben Sie wie Sie sich in Deutschland so fühlen</li> <li>• Welche Bedeutung hat Kamerun noch für Sie?</li> <li>• Hätten Sie die Wahl, wo würden Sie am liebsten leben?</li> </ul>
<b>Thema: Armut</b> Was bedeutet für Sie reich sein?		
<b>Inhaltliche Aspekte:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reichtum definieren</li> <li>• Eigene Vorstellung der Armut</li> <li>• Eigene Wahrnehmung der Kinderarmut</li> </ul>	<b>Aufrechterhaltungsfragen:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Was bringt Ihnen reich sein gedanklich noch in Verbindung?</li> <li>• Sind Sie reich?</li> <li>• Was sind arme Kinder</li> </ul>	<b>Nachfrage:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Können Sie von einer Armutserfahrung berichten? Wie würden Sie sich klazifizieren?</li> </ul>



	für Sie? • Gibt es sonst noch etwas? • Und weiter? • Wie ist es denn so?	• Haben Sie eigener Kinderarmutserfahrung schon mal gemacht? • Was können Sie mir noch über die Armut sagen?
Sonstige (Fall im Gespräch noch nicht geklärt ist)		
• Können Sie sich glücklicher vorstellen? Warum? • Fällt Ihnen sonst noch was ein?		

Source: Self-made table

## 4. 2. The two mixed interview forms for this research

### I. Standardized Interviews Section

The empirical phase of this research is based on qualitative interviews in Cameroonian households in Berlin. The standardize interview section form for this research was chosen to lead the inquiry. This type of interview seems to better correspond to this work since the children viewpoint is of prime importance in this work. Heinzel stated in his article, *Qualitative Interviews mit Kindern*: “In der Forschung mit Kindern werden verschiedene Formen qualitativer Interviews verwendet: Als geeignet erwiesen sich teilstandardisierte Interviews, die häufig auch als Leitfaden-Interviews oder semistrukturierte Interviews bezeichnet werden. Variante teilstrukturierter Interviews sind z.B: Struktur- oder Dilemma-Interviews, fokussierte Interviews, problemzentrierte Interviews...” (Friebertshäuser & Prengel Hrsg 1997: pp.402).

The questionnaire constituted for this research was a partly standardized interview. Questions were standard and they were all focused on specific problems, to try to better understand life of Cameroonian children in Berlin.

The interviews with parents and their children in Cameroonian households in Berlin were conducted privately. After having introduction and short presentation of the research work the interviewer explained and assured that the data shall be handled with due confidentiality and kept anonymous. The first step was then to select the language in which the interviews should be proceed. After that was agreed, the interviewer tried to break the ice by striking a joke in the effort to make them feel free and to win their trust, before starting with interview on their identity and then with questions directly concerning the topic such as: “What does it mean to be wealthy for you?”, or “How do you feel in Germany?”. Open questions were preferred to give the interviewee an opportunity to say more about themselves and with examples. Questions were plain, clear and simple. They were therefore easy to understand and should have been easy to answer. Each question was focused on a single aspect or topic analysed in this work. The questions were targeted relating to specific topics: personal information, family, school or work, future life perspectives, immigration and perception of child poverty. Questions on these topics were as open and as neutral as possible to give Cameroonian people the possibility to feel free to express their private thoughts. Some foreseen questions could also provide more details or additional useful information. Some answers were given before the question was asked, in such cases those questions were not repeated. A very important advantage of a standardized interview section with Cameroonian households in Berlin is that we have details and coherence in specific aspects of their life experience. This makes the comparison of various interviews more meaningful.

During all interviews, a contra-test-question was asked at the end. A contra-test-question was the way to keep all responses together. The contra test question was the negative form of the main interrogation of this research, and the question was: “Do you think you are rich?” This question directly ties with personal life experience of interviewed people. Most of interviewees gave the same argument as before and maintain their position, which was a sign that they were consistent with their view point. Some respondents hesitated before answering, and ended up shifting from their initial position. And this was a sign that they were not so certain of their opinion. Questions were also formulated as neutral as possible to ensure objectivity of answers. It was more a discussion rather than an interview. The sample respondents felt

comfortable during interviews. This helped the researcher avoid breaking thread with lengthy pauses which could have been distracted from the purpose of the interview. The research issues include the perception of child poverty in Cameroonian households in Berlin. Cameroonian parents were asked to give their opinion on their children issues; while children were questioned on their current life experience and on their expectations for the future. Questions had to do with what makes them feel happy as children in Berlin. Whether they feel poor in Germany? Or could they compare their situation with that of other children of same age they knew in Berlin? Which criteria were important for them to be taken into account in order to be consider a child as poor?

This form of interview with Cameroonian children had advantage of leading us to individualised outcomes. Every respondent had to give answers to same questions with a focus on particular problems and in a subjective way. It is quite edifying to examine the various scenarios because all Cameroonians interviewed for this research all spoke from their single personal experience.

## II. The narrative approach of interviews

While interviewing Cameroonian parents in Berlin, the researcher used the narrative approach in a qualitative way according to the subjective approach developed in the 1960s by Bernard M. S. Van Praag (1968)<sup>6</sup>. The study will also imply making inquiries with Cameroonian parents purposefully and randomly selected in Berlin. Then selected parents will be subject to narrative interview because they are supposed to have longer life experience as compared to their children, and this could better reflect their African background, since they grew up in Africa. The aim was to capture the true meaning of child poverty concept from a genuine Cameroonian perspective. The justification for using this qualitative approach was to understand the way Cameroonian people deal with their perception of child poverty in the German context. Their perception of child poverty might impacts on the way they take actions and carry out their daily activities handling children issues.

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<sup>6</sup> To statistically measure the poverty the subjective approach takes into account the judgement from Experts and the opinion of the concerning person (Bernard M. S. Van Praag, *Individual Welfare Functions and Consumer Behaviour*, Amsterdam, North Holland Publishing Company, 1968.)

The interviews were conducted with single parent or single child separately. The interviews lasted on average 30 minutes each with one break depending on the interviewee. The interview was conducted in private in a small room within the family house, and was recorded with an Olympus digital voice recorder. A notebook was used to jot down details of visual reactions, including off-putting appearance, language style, and general atmosphere. As mentioned before, interviews were conducted in English and in French with the parents, but it was made in German language with the children as formulated in the data entry form, because these Cameroonian children felt more comfortable to speaking German. The researcher first started by introducing ourselves and then presenting the research. Then the introduction consisted of in winning the interviewee's confidence by asking everyday questions such as the type of music or food s/he prefers. When the discussion became relaxed, we could then ask the interviewee to tell about his/her life in Germany. The interviewer did not interfere because it was important to get their complete opinion. The inconvenience was that such responses ended up lengthening the interviews. But it was exciting for them to talk about their personal life experience in Germany for first time in minute details.

For Jakob: „Im Zuge einer Entfaltung qualitativer Forschungsansätze und der Herausbildung einer sozialwissenschaftlichen Biographieforschung in den 70er und 80er Jahren wurde das narrative Interview von Fritz Schütze und seinen Mitarbeitern entwickelt. Das Verfahren steht in der Tradition interpretativer Sozialforschung, in der von einem Verständnis sozialer Wirklichkeit als Resultat interpretativer Prozesse ausgegangen wird. Mit der Erhebung und Auswertung narrativer Interviews geht es darum, die Sinnkonstruktionen und Handlungen aus der Perspektive der Handelnden und erleidenden Individuen zu erfassen und einer Analyse zugänglich zu machen“ (Friebertshäuser & Prengel Hrsg 1997: 445).

In this research, Cameroonian people were led to talk about their own life experience. They became sorts of “professional” of their personal experience. As Heinzl says: „...doch hätten bereits zehnjährige Kinder eigene Lebenslinien konstruiert...“ (Friebertshäuser & Prengel Hrsg 1997: pp. 403). And he says further: „In jedem Fall ist es wichtig, Orte für das Gespräch zu wählen, die den Kindern vertraut sind“ (Friebertshäuser & Prengel Hrsg 1997: pp. 405).

The children and their parents in Cameroonian households were all interviewed in their family residence in Berlin. At the end of each of our interviews, Cameroonian people told have been really appreciated and were proud to be the focus of our talk. Which doesn't mean that they are less important people in their daily live, but also it was a new experience for some of them to express their opinion on how they perceive their life and their life experience life in Berlin. All interviews were done in a location chosen by the respondents. And all of them wanted it to take place in their family house as Friebertshäuser & Prengel Hrsg wrote in 1997.

To avoid external influences, the interviewees were not disturbed with new questions while narrating their story. Thereafter, further questions could then be asked from their responses. The researcher always endeavoured not to stop the interviewees in their argumentation. And when they ran short of arguments, a more explicit question was asked with illustrations if needed to help them better narrate their story.

#### 4. 3. Backstage behaviour during interviews

Contact to Cameroonian families has been taken through the Cameroon embassy in Germany since this research has chosen to focus on Cameroonian households in Berlin. Six month after this first step the first respondent was contacted. This first contact was made by chance thanks to an embassy employee and this acted as a trigger to reach the other respondents by a pyramid scheme.

The initial idea was to contact Cameroonian families through the Cameroon Embassy in Berlin. However, the contact of the first respondents was reached by random. That was best way to connect to Cameroonian families having teenagers. But it was almost not possible to have any direct contact with any of these families. So the Embassy allowed to the researcher to paste up an announcement in the waiting room of the chancery, about seeking for Cameroonian families having teenagers. After many months the first contact came from an embassy officer, Mrs A3 who did not want to be mentioned in this work. The first contact was made in 2012, she has a nephew living with her (15 years old in 2012). Mrs A3 from family Atangana reassured that her nephew will agree to make this interview, and she said "he will enjoy it, because he is a show-off teenager". It was kind of her and the researcher insisted that she should first ask him if

he can be interested on giving this interview for our research. The second time Ms A3 was called in order to ask her if the young boy was interested in order for the author to arrange for an appointment, the first interview took then place with first contact. The researcher introduced herself and gave a simple overview of the work and the interview that was to be conducted. The interviewee had exams the subsequent weeks but he said he would be pleased to be interviewed later on. Therefore another appointment has been made after two weeks. From first physical contact with the researcher, he gave the impression to be proud of himself. He was able to speak German and French as native speakers do, but he made the choice to be addressed in German during the interview. Thereafter, we asked mother of family Atangana (A2) if she knew other Cameroonian teenagers in Berlin who might be willing to be interviewed for our research and she obliged. The second family has been contacted through her.

“Das Schneeballsystem (eine Befragte nennt weitere Bekannte oder Interessierte- das birgt allerdings die Gefahr, nur eine spezielle Gruppe zu erreichen)” (Friebertshäuser & Prengel Hrsg 1997: pp.391)

With the help of first family in Berlin, access to other Cameroonian families has been made. The mother in Family Atangana (A2) asked her girlfriend if she had no problem having an interview for our research. It is a result of this that make to come across the second Cameroonian family with young children in Berlin. The weakness with pyramid scheme is that a circle of friends is more likely to have many people with similar life styles and experiences. Luckily, after observation, that was not the case. Moreover, an exceptional solidarity and community spirit among Cameroonian families living in Berlin could be noticed. The networking was structured through regional organisations like the *Amicale du Mbam et Sympathysans* (A.M., Verein der aus MBAM-Kamerun Stammenden und SympathisanInnen) based in Berlin.

All young people met for the purpose of this research were Cameroonian children aged from 11 to 16 years old. All first contacts with the interviewees were made via phone either with parents or directly with the young people.

The interviews were recorded with an “Olympus” voice recorder for all interviews as mentioned before, a new generation of device suitable for interview recording. The

Olympus voice recorder used for this work was small and easy to handle. It uses two small batteries to work. Most important point at the start of interviews was to set a relaxed atmosphere: “The interview often began as the interviewer’s recorder is set up amid friendly greetings and chatting, to bring about a conducive and pleasant environment for the interview conversation” (Gubrium & Holstein 2001: pp.91).

Before addressing the children, we needed to present the work a new to all interviewees. The first point focus on the personal information of the interviewee. The second step was about her/her family, especially their relationship with parents and children: “When interviewing children, it is essential that researchers begin by examining the power dynamics between adults and youth” (Gubrium & Holstein 2001: pp.182). It is actually possible that parents have a lot of authority and influence over their children. As Heinzl stated: „Bei wiederholten Gesprächen mit Kindern stellte sich heraus, dass die Antworten der Kinder auch von der Tagesform abhängig waren“ (Friebertshäuser & Prengel Hrsg 1997: 409). It is asserted that answers given by children might merely reflect their mood of the day. If they had a bad experience on the day, it is likely to be reflected to the response they give. And also if they had a pleasant day, it can be captured by their answers. Heinzl goes on stating that:

„Ob die Kinder einsilbige oder ausführliche Antworten geben, hängt vor allem von der Gesprächssituation sowie den Fragen und Stimuli im Interview ab. Dennoch gibt es auch Themenbereiche, auf die Kinder zurückhaltend oder ängstlich reagieren.“ (Friebertshäuser & Prengel Hrsg 1997: 408)

According to Heinzl, children are very sensitive human beings, and might be touch when faced with particular topics or situations. The environment can influence a child in an interview. The greatest difficulty in interviewing Cameroonian families in Berlin could be that much of what goes on in-there can be hidden to people from outside, i.e. definitely from us during our interviews. Important behaviours such as child abuse, domestic violence and childrearing are not generally visible to persons outside the family (Greenstein 2006: p.9), and children would feel uncomfortable tackle such issues and topics.

Another problem is that some information collected for this work should be kept private, as “family secrets” (Greenstein 2006, p.9). Families have their own patterns of

behaviours or rules that have been built through generations that lived together. That is the case with unwritten rules, like for example regarding where each one sits at the dining table, or the fact that a child always cleans the parent's bedroom etc. According to Greenstein those rules are often not shared with the outside world: "The public image that a family chooses to present to the outside world can be different from the private, internal image" (Greenstein 2006: p.9).

A further difficulty to better analyse Cameroonian families in this research would be our preconception of the family. Everyone is familiar with family realities. Greenstein (2006: p.10) noticed three forms of interference with our ability to study families: "our own background [...] our own experience [...] and ethnocentrism". Our background has to do with type of family which we grew up in, our political leanings and religious convictions. Our experience can hamper what we know or understand, or tolerate. And ethnocentrism is the illusion that our own ideas and practices are somehow *the best or the right* ones.

These presumptions were ignored at all in this research. The chosen method will avoid personal influences on the results and the interpretation of the inquiries. The place of the interview was chosen by the Cameroonian children or parents, but it almost took place in their personal environment, it was up to them to choose in which room they preferred to have the interview in their house. The length of the interview was about one hour for almost each one of them.

- Transcription

The written reproduction of the recorded speeches was made in two shots. The first step was taken after the interview where we analysed written down notes with all additional information drawn from non-verbal communication during interviews. The second step was to write down or transcribe the recorded speeches. The main goal of these transcriptions was to draw up some real progress in interviews. And the details of non-spoken information noted in the transcript can only be analysed in synchronisation with overall interview.

#### 4. 4. Data interpretation in this research



Table 8: Operationalisation of theory in interviews

	Perception of child poverty	Family cultural value	Capabilities
Family Atangana (3 kids)	16 years Son (A1): No income, lack of food	Solidarity	<div>For children:</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Very good language skill</li><li>• Strong social network</li></ul>
	Over 30 years old mother (A2): Children are the wealth for Africans		
Family Bitchoga (4 kids)	14 years daughter (B1): Lack of food, orphans, working children	Caring	
	39 years mother (B2): Children are the wealth for Africans		
Family Camto (3 kids)	13 years daughter (C1): Lack of food	Sharing	
	About 35 years father (C2): Lack of education		
Family Deumaga (2 kids)	11 years son (D1): Lack of Shelter, lack of food, lack of water	Sociability	
	35 years father (D2): Lack of income		

Source: Self-made table

The interviews for this research were conducted so that Cameroonian parents and their children in Berlin were able to account for their own perception of child poverty. And then, the family values in Cameroonian households in Berlin had to be presented in the way Cameroonian parents try to transmit them to their children. After this, it would be interesting to find out how the cultural background of Cameroonian people fit in to the German context. Based on the above table, it appears that the children A1 from family Atangana, B1 from family Bitchoga, C1 from family Camto and D1 from family Deumaga have a very similar definition of child poverty, which is a mixed materialistic view. These children perceive child poverty as lack of money or food, care and shelter. At the other side, Cameroonian parents, mother A2 from family Atangana, mother B2 from family Bitchoga, father C2 from family Camto and father D2 from family Deumaga, on the other hand have a very traditional view of child poverty concept inspired by their African cultural background. In fact, it appears that Cameroonian parents couldn't explain the notion of "child poverty" for they don't even know about this reality in their culture. They all perceived their children as their wealth. The only one difference on this is the opinions of two of the fathers concerned, C2 and D2, who brought up two additional elements. Father of Family Camto (C2) adds that being wealthy is to have a family with children and access to education, and for father of Family Deumaga (D2), it means having a family with children, but also being able to provide for one's family. The method of collecting exactly same information for different families help very much to better compare similarities and differences between families.

Through this various view points on child poverty issues in different interviews in Cameroonian households, it is possible to draw a main value pattern for each family investigated. Four cultural values appear to be dominant in interviews for these families: solidarity, care taking, sharing and sociability. It is important to note that some other values could be perceived in these families, but only those impacting the child's social life in the German society were considered. It is also important to underscore that the value of solidarity as a crossed-cutting value that emerges in each individual family.

The final goal of the inquiry was to find out which Capabilities these children with Cameroonian background can develop in the German context regarding their cultural background. Two similar points appeared in any of the four children's profiles

presented: the German skill of these Cameroonian children was very good, and they all decided to be interviewed in German because they felt more comfortable in that language. And the second point was the scope and the influence of the social networking of these children, for they all have so many friends outside the family. This might be because they make good use of the assets they have from their families as values to fit in the German society. These children develop particular competences to better enjoy their life in Berlin. These aptitudes make them be hybrid children.

#### i. Qualitative content analysis according to Mayring

According to Mayring, the main goal of the content analysis is “[...] die Analyse von Material, das aus irgendeiner Art von Kommunikation stammt” (Mayring 2007: pp.11).

The main point in the analysis of interviews content in this research has all to do with the art of communication. For Mayring, the content analysis can be understood in six points:

“1. Inhaltsanalyse hat Kommunikation zum Gegenstand.

2. Die Inhaltsanalyse arbeitet mit Texten, Bildern, Noten, mit symbolischem Material also. Das heißt, die Kommunikation liegt in irgendeiner Art protokolliert, festgehalten vor. Gegenstand der Analyse ist somit fixierte Kommunikation.

3. Besonders heftig wehren sich Inhaltsanalytiker immer wieder gegen freie Interpretation, gegen impressionistische Ausdeutung des zu analysierenden Materials. Inhaltsanalyse will systematisch vorgehen. Damit grenzt sich gegen einen Großteil hermeneutischer Verfahren ab.

4. Das systematische Vorgehen zeigt sich vor allem darin, dass die Analyse nach expliziten Regeln abläuft (zumindest ablaufen soll). Diese Regelgeleitetheit ermöglicht es, dass auch andere die Analyse verstehen, Nachvollziehen und überprüfen können.

5. Das systematische Vorgehen zeigt sich aber auch darin, dass eine gute Inhaltsanalyse theoriegeleitet vorgeht. Sie will nicht einfach einen Text referieren, sondern analysiert ihr Material unter einer theoretisch ausgewiesenen Fragestellung; die Ergebnisse werden vom jeweiligen Theoriehintergrund her interpretiert und auch die einzelnen

Analyseschritte sind von theoretischen Überlegungen geleitet. Theoriegeleitetheit bedeutet dabei nicht Abheben von konkretem Material in Sphären der Unverständlichkeit, sondern heißt Anknüpfen an den Erfahrungen anderer mit dem zu untersuchenden Gegenstand.

6.Im letzten Punkt wurde bereits angedeutet, daß Inhaltsanalyse ihr Material nicht ausschließlich für sich analysieren will (wie z.B. die Textanalyse), sondern als Teil des Kommunikationsprozesses“. (Mayring 2007: pp.12)

All the information given by the persons interviewed in this research were connected, so we cannot pick some and interpret them separately. This the reason why all main points from the interviews in this research analysed was connect to the entire interviews. Which means all information was somehow important. It is also important processing them as a whole to better understand the progression of arguments given by the respondent. The need was to preserve the coherence of the declaration of the interviewees as Mayring wrote:

„Ein besonderer Vorteil inhaltsanalytischen Vorgehens im Vergleich zu anderen Textanalyseansätzen ist ihre kommunikationswissenschaftliche Verankerung. Das Material wird immer in seinem Kommunikationszusammenhang verstanden. Der Interpret muß angeben, auf welchen Teil im Kommunikationsprozeß er seine Schlussfolgerung aus der Materialanalyse beziehen will... Der Text wird so immer innerhalb seines Kontextes interpretiert“ (Mayring 2007: pp.42).

The theory also played a very central role in the qualitative content analysis of this research: „In qualitativ orientierter Forschung wird immer wieder betont, dass hier theoretische Argumente herangezogen werden müssen. Technische Unschärfe werden durch theoretische Stringenz ausgezogen werden müssen“ (Mayring 2077: pp.45)

At this stage, it is important to pay particular attention to the interview topics questions.

For the analysis flow model (“Ablaufmodell der Analyse”) there are some very important points that help understand the material contents:

„Dabei (Ablaufmodell der Analyse) werden zunächst, um die Präzision der Inhaltsanalyse zu erhöhen, Analyseeinheiten festgelegt:

- Die Kodiereinheit legt fest, welches der kleinste Materialbestandteil ist, der ausgewertet werden darf, was der minimale Textteil ist, der unter eine Kategorie fallen kann.
- Die Kontexteinheit legt den größten Textbestandteil fest, der unter eine Kategorie fallen kann.
- Die Auswertungseinheit legt fest, welche Textteile jeweils nacheinander ausgewertet werden“ (Mayring 2007: pp.53)

Picture 2: Inhaltsanalytisches Kommunikationsmodell

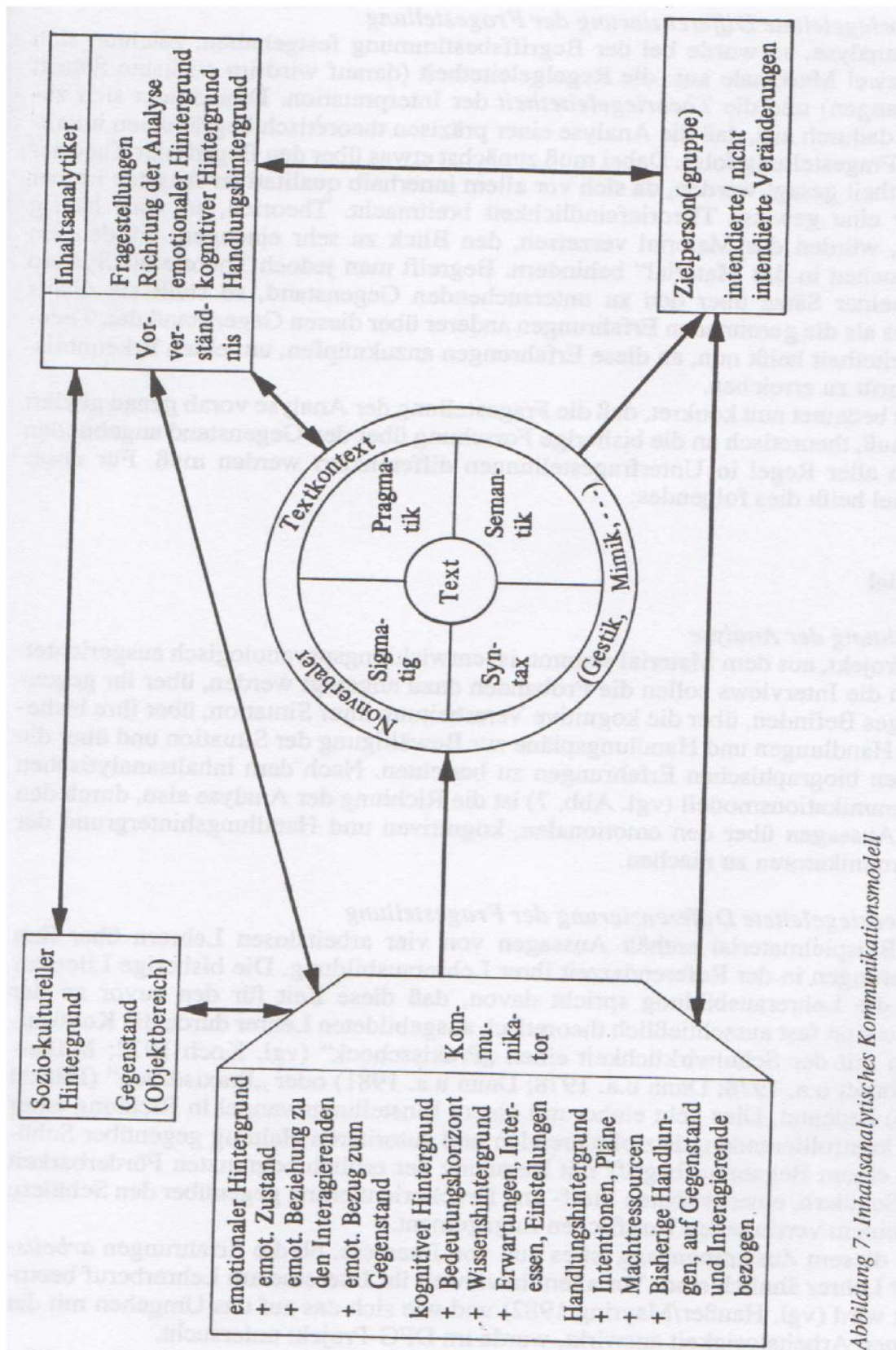


Abbildung 7: Inhaltsanalytisches Kommunikationsmodell

Source: Mayring 2007: pp.51

## ii. Qualitative technique of data analysis

- Explanation

„Ziel der Analyse (bei der Explikation) ist es, zu einzelnen fraglichen Textteilen (Begriffen, Sätzen,...) zusätzliches Material heranzutragen, das das Verständnis erweitert, das die Textstelle erläutert, erklärt, ausdeutet“ (Mayring 2007: pp.58).

Here, the explanation is lexical and grammatical. Mayring specified that the language should be contextualised for better understanding. It is a way of decoding the language. This detailed new reading of a text helps highlighting underlying messages.

„Bei jeder Explikation muß die Grundlage die lexikalisch- grammatikalische Definition sein; die Bedeutung von Sprache wird laufend auf dem jeweiligen kulturellen Hintergrund in ihrer jeweils aktuellen Ausprägung in Wörterbüchern, Lexika festgehalten; die Struktur von Sätzen wird in Grammatiken festgelegt. Diese allgemeine lexikalisch-grammatikalische Definition der Textstelle zu kennen ist die Voraussetzung der Explikation...Ziel der Explikation muß es dann sein, aufgrund der Kontextanalyse eine Formulierung zu finden, die eine Aufschlüsselung, eine Interpretation der Textstelle leistet. Im Gesamtzusammenhang des Materials lässt sich 5dann überprüfen, ob diese Explikation ausreicht“ (Mayring 2007: pp.77).

Explanation is the right technique to get the substance of a text in six phases:

Table 9: Ablaufmodell explizierender Inhaltsanalyse

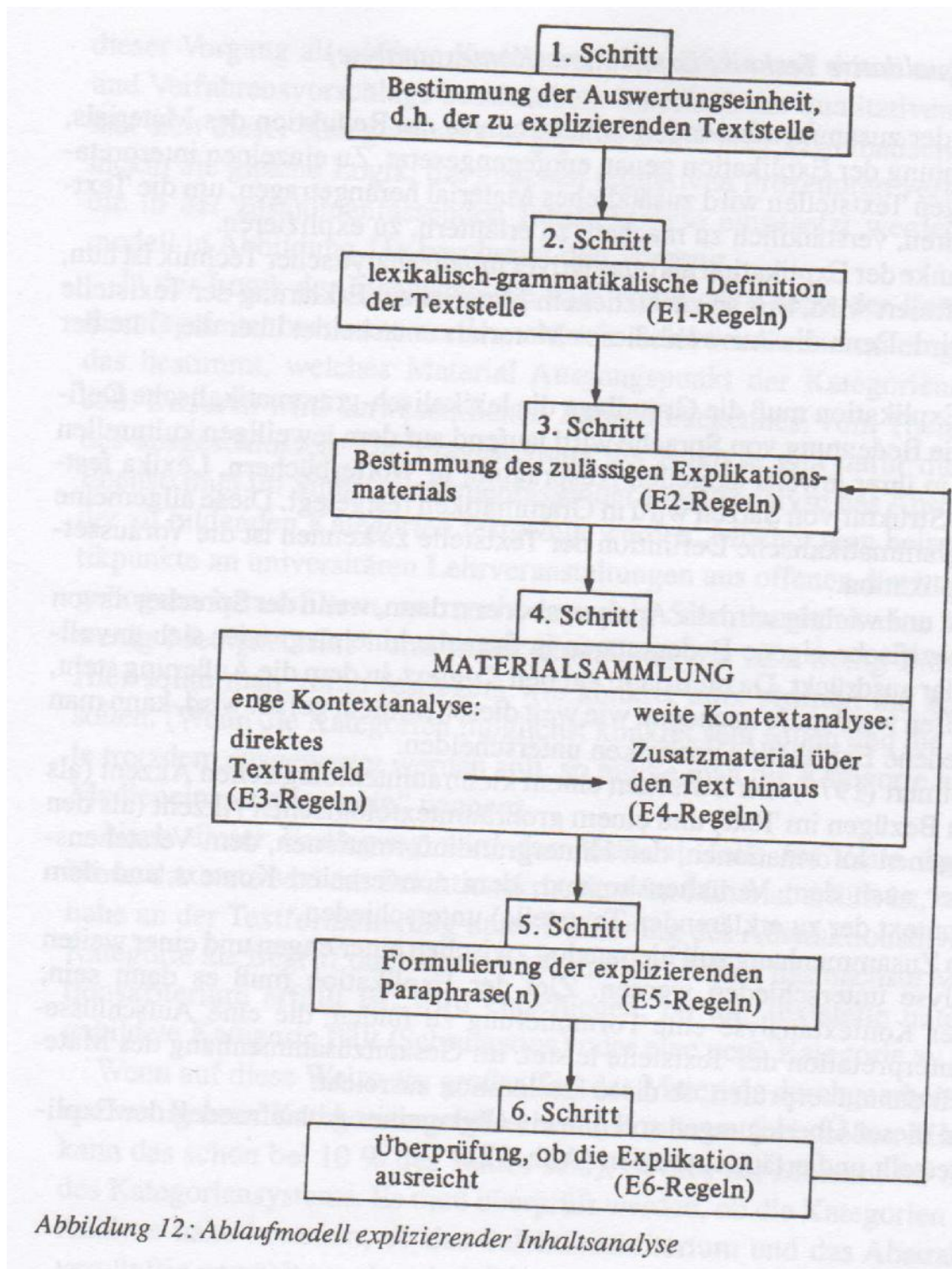


Abbildung 12: Ablaufmodell explizierender Inhaltsanalyse

Source: Mayring 2007: pp. 78



- Structuring

„Ziel der Analyse (Bei der Strukturierung) ist es, bestimmte Aspekte aus dem Material herauszufiltern, unter vorher festgelegten Ordnungskriterien einen Querschnitt durch das Material zu legen oder das Material aufgrund bestimmter Kriterien einzuschätzen“ (Mayring 2007: 58).

As far as the technical structuring is concerned, there are three important points to bear in mind: (i) categorisation; (ii) classification; (iii) and the encoding of information. Mayring gives a general definition of the process:

“Wenn man das Verfahren der Strukturierung ganz allgemein beschreiben will, scheinen mir einige Punkte besonders wichtig: [...]

1)Definition der Kategorien

Es wird genau definiert, welche Textbestandteile unter eine Kategorie fallen

2)Ankerbeispiele

Es werden konkrete Textstellen angeführt, die unter eine Kategorie fallen und als Beispiele für diese Kategorie gelten sollen.

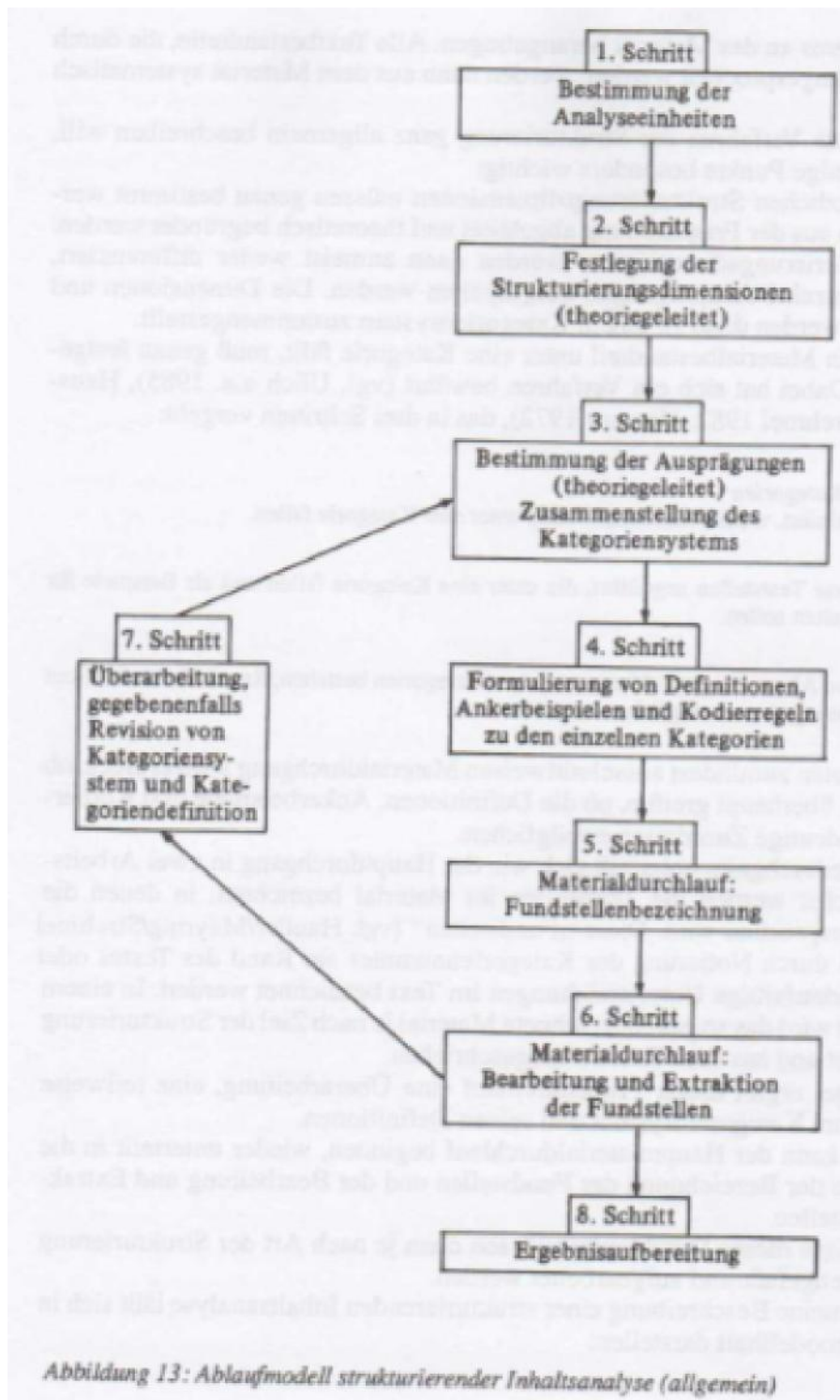
3)Kodierregeln

Es werden dort, wo Abgrenzungsprobleme zwischen Kategorien bestehen, Regeln formuliert, um eindeutige Zuordnungen zu ermöglichen“ (Mayring 2007: pp.83).

Mayring also stated structuring functions in theory: “Die grundsätzlichen Strukturierungsdimensionen müssen genau bestimmt werden, sie müssen aus der Fragestellung abgeleitet und theoretisch begründet werden” (pp. 83).

This point was particularly important in our analysis because this research is about understanding the perception of child poverty by Cameroonian people living in Berlin under the microscope of the capability approach of Amartya Sen.

Table 10: Ablaufmodell strukturierender Inhaltsanalyse (allgemein)



Source: Mayring 2007: pp.84

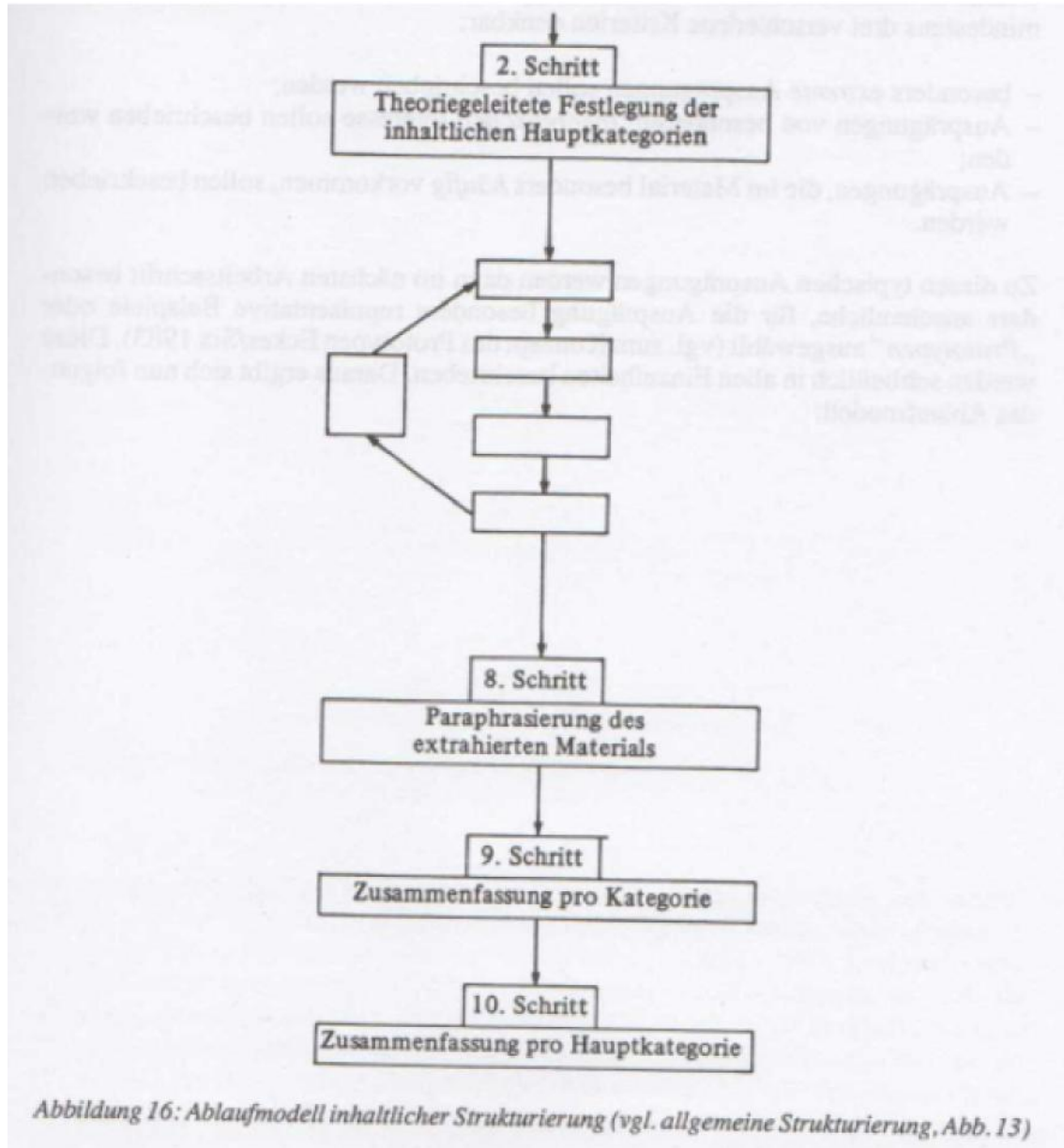
- Content structuring

According to Mayring constructing may take many forms. But for this work, the right one is the content structuring (“Inhaltliche Strukturierung”).

„Eine inhaltliche Strukturierung will Material zu bestimmten Themen, zu bestimmten Inhaltsbereichen extrahieren und zusammenfassen“ (Mayring 2007: pp. 85)

The main point for the content structuring in this research was to isolate particular topics from the material we had and confront them to the Capability Approach that is the chosen theory for this research.

Table 11: Ablaufmodell inhaltlicher Strukturierung



Source: Mayring 2007: pp.89

### iii. Plan of the qualitative technique of analysis of interviews

As stated before, the analysis of interviews in this research will be consistent with the analysis of interviews of any sample to make the findings easier to understand.

#### Interviews analysis layout:

Biography of Cameroonian sample people in Berlin

Paraphrase of interviews with Cameroonian sample people in Berlin

I. Perception of child poverty in Cameroonian samples families in Berlin

II. Socialization of Cameroonian sample families in Berlin

1) Identity of sample children with Cameroonian background in Berlin

a) Values in Cameroonian sample families in Berlin

b) Social life of Cameroonian sample families in Berlin

2) Break with the cultural background in Cameroonian sample families in Berlin?

III. Future Capabilities of sample children with Cameroonian background in Germany

Abstract of interviews

The structure of interviews analysis will be as above described, although the data from parents and their children might be somehow different. The analysis will focus on three important points: the perception of child poverty first, then the way it determines the family value, and lastly the profile of their social life in Berlin will be drawn to find out if their perception of child poverty impacts on their future Capabilities, before ending with a conclusion of to the interview. This last point will be far wordier on life of Cameroonian children for they are the subject matter of this work.

## 5. Findings and analysis<sup>7</sup>

Every single interview for this work, was conducted in a specific way because of the particularity of each interviewee's life experience, which called for concrete answers every time. Another advantage was the non-verbal data observed that was very useful later on to make the interpretation more precise while avoiding misunderstanding. This research gathered important data in the confidence of single talks with both Cameroonian parents and their children in Berlin. Interviews were open conversations in privacy and the answers were sincere because the exchanges were very pleasant. The decisive advantage accounting for the receptive reactions by interview partners was very important. The interviews partners felt comfortable during our inquiry, which easily aroused an atmosphere of confidence and trust. The Cameroonian people were so happy to have the opportunity to share their life experience in Germany, and to bring it to words.

The analysis of Findings in this chapter will be divided in four parts since four Cameroonian families were interviewed as following: the Analysis of the interviews with the family Atangana (5.1), then the Analysis of interviews with the family Bitchoga (5.2) will follow. Before presenting the Analysis of the interviews with family Camto (5.3); after that we will focus on the Analysis of interviews with family Deumaga (5.4). At the end of the analysis, a partial conclusion will be made to present a crossed analysis of the data.

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<sup>7</sup> For the entire interviews, please kindly refer to the attachments

Table 12: Samples in this research

Fictitious names*		Sex	Age	Families' life
Family Atangana	A1	male	16	3 Kids
	A2	Female	Over 30	
Family Bitchoga	B1	Female	14	4 Kids
	B2	Female	39	
Family Camto	C1	Female	13	3 Kids
	C2	Male	About 35	
Family Deumaga	D1	Male	11	2 Kids
	D2	Male	35	

Source: Self-made table

\*Fictive initials to the samples should make the cases study easier to distinguish for the reader

### 5. 1. Solidarity among family members: Analysis of interviews with family Atangana

This is a qualitative analysis of the interviews with family Atangana. Interviews were conducted with a teenager A1 and his mother A2 (who is actually his aunt) in Berlin. A1 lives in his aunt's home in Berlin. A2 is married, and she has two other children of her own. Actually in the Cameroonian mind-set, she has three children for she has been bringing up A1 exactly in the way she is doing with her own biological children. She has been caring for A1 for about seven years now. A1 was 16 years old by the time this interview was carried out in 2013. At the same time, for A1, his aunt A2 is his real mother because he has been living with her and her family for so long. A1's biological mother lives in Cologne, a different city in Germany. The biological parents of A1 are separated, and A1 is their single child. In this Cameroonian family in Germany, a single child is a poor child, because a child should never be alone in a household. To solve this 'problem', and make sure that A1 is not going to grow up as a 'poor' child, his

biological mother sent him to her sister A2, to better take care of him in a 'normal' family environment with siblings. His biological parents are all from Cameroon, but he is naturalized German as he said.

We got the contacts of family Atangana through the Cameroonian embassy in Berlin. When we got in touch with A2 and asked her for an interview for this research, she accepted to be interviewed after a moment hesitation. She promised to revert back to us again after asking her son (actually her nephew A1, 16 in 2013) if he could be interested. Mother A2 (actually the aunt of A1) calls back two days later and we made an appointment. On the basis of the school schedule and the son A1 wishes, the interview took place on Monday, April 15<sup>th</sup> 2013, because A1 had no time during week-ends. So the interview with A1 took place in his parents' house (actually his aunt's and uncle's) in Berlin where he lives with his brothers (who are actually his cousins). The interview with A1 was a one-to-one encounter with us. The interview points were clear and carefully chosen so as to get maximum information from A1. A1 was a very extroversive young boy. He dressed in blue jean with a white t-shirt, and sandals. He seemed to be a very friendly and open minded. He was smiling all the time, and was very expressive gestures. He chose to take the interview exclusively in German, and he had a very good command of the language.

As far as A2 is concerned, she appeared to be a very determined woman at our first encounter on April 2013. She was friendly but seems a little hesitate during first contact. We came to her the next day to have the interview with her, and she looked more relaxed than the former day before when we had the interview with her son. She later stated that she was glad to undergo the interview. She was heavily pregnant at the time of the interview in 2013, but she had no drawn features, nor was she in a bad mood. Well, it was particularly interesting for her to talk about children, because she loved children, and she was about to have another one. She was dressed in an African gown, probably to underline how important her culture was for her. A2 doesn't have sufficient knowledge in German and she was not interested to take the interview in German.



## 5. 1. 1. Analysis of the interview with A1 son of family Atangana A1

(April 15<sup>th</sup> 2013 at 7:09pm. Duration: #00:31:08#)

- A1 Biography

A1 is a young boy with Cameroonian background, living in Berlin. He was born in 1997 in Berlin, Germany. At the time of the interview in 2013, he was 16 years old. His parents originally come from Cameroon although both were naturalized Germans, for they have been living in Germany for over 15 years at the time of the inquiry in 2013. A1 has been in Cameroon only once to the best of his knowledge by the time of the interview. His biological parents divorced many years ago. His biological mother works in the show business as an accountant in Cologne, Germany. His biological father lives in a clinic in Cologne, because he is critically sick. A1 lives in Berlin since the age of 7. About 7 years ago, when his parents divorced, A1 moved to Berlin to live with his stepfather, with the hope that his mother will make more children although she was working in Cologne. Unfortunately, after sometime, he was in conflict with his stepfather, and because the latter did not have enough time to take care of him, and the mother did not have another child either. A1 then moved to his aunt A2, his new 'mother' up till the moment of the interview in 2013. He lives with his two cousins whom he considers in the family as his 'brothers', and an uncle who has become his 'father'. This arrangement was made to give A1 the opportunity to grow up in a normal African family. Although A1 was a lone child to his biological parents, he got the opportunity to live with new parents to make sure he is not growing up "poor", as a single child.

In Germany, a family with at least three children is considered as a large family. Parents of A1 grew up in very large African families in Cameroon and for them it is important for a child to blossom in a large family to better get the family values. The biological mother of A1 has 9 siblings and his biological father has about 6 siblings. All those aunts and uncles have children who are considered in this Cameroonian family as siblings to A1. For this reason, A1 is not considered as a lonely child in his family since he lives in a household with two siblings. It can be speculated that A1 has not got

biological siblings for two reasons: first because his biological parents are divorced and live apart; and the second reason might be because his biological mother is working, and may not be interested to stop working and have another child for the time being. But this doesn't really matter since A1 has many other 'brothers and sisters' who are supposed to be his siblings in the large family. A single child is considered in the Cameroonian family as a poor child, this is probably the reason why A1 was sent to his aunt in Berlin, to live with his cousins together to make him enjoy the atmosphere of a 'normal family', a large family to which he belongs. In this Cameroonian family's mind, a child should not grow up alone. His biological mother lives in Cologne alone, and his stepfather also lives alone in Berlin. The decision to send A1 to Berlin and enjoy the family life with his aunt was made by his biological mother and by his aunt A2, who became his 'mother'. A1 has two cousins who are his 'brothers' now, so that he will not be lonely. His aunt was pregnant at the time of the interview and she educates A1 just as she does with her two other sons. In this way A1 has become the 'child' of his aunt A2.

Despite the fact that A1 is born in Berlin and grew up in Germany, his family educated him in accordance to the African culture. One central point of the traditional education of A1 got from his parents -who are his aunt and his uncle - is to value the family. By this, it means that kinships in the family must always be considered as closer as possible to prevent people from feeling 'poor'. This is the reason why the notion of aunt and cousin is considered unknown in this Cameroonian family in Berlin, because an aunt is a 'mother', an uncle is a 'father', and cousins are 'brothers' or 'sisters'. A1 even considers his cousins like his brothers:

Son of family Atangana, A1 16 years old: [L 24-25/...also, bei mir...also in der Familie sag man aber, dass die Cousins auch die Brüder sind]; or A1 [L370-371/: meine Tante ist auch meine Mutter]

The family size automatically takes an impressive dimension when all cousins, aunts and uncles are considered like siblings or direct relatives. This is the case of family Atangana (family A). The size of family A seems very impressive if we try to have an overview of A1's 'siblings' and 'parents'. A1 is biologically a single child, but in his large family, he is considered to have many siblings although they do not all live

nearby. In fact, most of the relatives of A1 are not living in Cameroon anymore. They are in the Cameroonian Diaspora all over the world:

Son of family Atangana, A1 16 years old: *[L 288-290/ „...meine Kusine Belinda sind in Frankreich, die andere sind alle auch in Frankreich. Einige sind hier in Deutschland, einige sind in Amerika, also sie sind alle ausgewandert von Kamerun“]*

This is the reason why A1 has not got a particular connection with Cameroon, the home country of his ‘parents’, his biological parents, and his others relatives. A1 does not feel any special need to go back to Cameroon, or even to visit Cameroon because the rest of his family has moved from there to Europe or to America. A1 shows no particular interest in Cameroon, but he likes to know that he can probably go and visit Cameroon. His biological mother had promised to go there with him on a trip, but she keeps on postponing.

Paraphrase of the interview with son of family Atangana, A1

## I. Perception of child poverty of A1

### 1) Material dimension of poverty for A1

At this point to define child poverty, A1 said that wealth is based on material belongings, A1 *[L 307-308/...Reich sein ist ja ein [...] ein Zustand, der auf materieller Besitz basiert]*. This was the first point of A1 about child poverty. This opinion first make a split between the Cameroonian thought and the way A1 perceives child poverty; because in Cameroonian families, a child is considered as rich or poor with regard to how many siblings it has got. And according to this, in Cameroonian families, an adult is considered poor according to how large his siblings and relative circles are. Although A1 grew up in a Cameroonian family with the influence of the Cameroonian culture, he develops his own opinion on this issue because he doesn’t think of poverty the way his parents do. It can be said that the view point of A1 at this stage reflects the influence of his German experience, and not that of his parents in the family. It might be considered that his outdoor fellows probably influenced this viewpoint. And A1 continued in his

thought to better explain his opinion. For A1, being rich is not only a matter of having property, it is also the accumulation of properties:

A1: *[L 309-310/ ... Also der von materieller Besitz begründet ist, also, sozusagen je mehr man besitzt, desto reicher ist man]*

This statement clearly explains the way A1 conceives poverty. If piling up material goods means one is wealthy for A1, then a child who is having lots of toys could not be said to be poor. For A1, it is important to own as much belongings as can be imagined to feel happy. He argues that if someone has more than he needs to live, he can start saving some to face hard times to come; and also for the family, since relatives show solidarity each other's. A1 translated this into his own example. A1 gave his opinion on the poverty issue:

A1: *[L 318-331: Auch mal fühle ich mich arm, wenn es um das Geld geht ...und ich brauche halt das Taschengeld dringend...fühle ich mich auch ein bisschen arm. Oder wenn ich [...] naja, nicht ganz aber ein bisschen halt, oder wenn ich nicht zum Essen habe, oder mich auch nicht zum Essen kaufen kann. Aber zum Beispiel wenn man nicht Genug Geld hat Grundbasierte Sachen wie zum Beispiel Essen zu kaufen oder so was, dann ist man so zu sagen arm, weil, man dann nicht selbst für sich sorgen kann“]*

A1's perception of poverty is a mixed material and a financial definition. He already felt poor when he did not have money to buy a trouser or when he couldn't buy food to eat. This view also shows that his perception of poverty is based on basic needs. A1 extended his definition by making a difference between living standards. Some needs like cars or bikes are not necessary basic needs. And one is not going to be frustrated just because he does not have such things. For him, the most important point is to be able to get bare necessities products like food. Because only those who eat well can feel good and be happy.

## 2) Wellbeing and happiness as basic capabilities for A1

In general, A1 means he has positive life experience. Sport and physical activities are key factors for self-fulfilment. When introducing himself, A1 felt the necessity to

underline that he enjoys playing soccer. He could become a professional footballer, but had to stop because of his studies. In the interview with him, A1 had a very expressive body language. As he said that he has stopped playing soccer, he rolled his eyes to clearly mean that this idea was not from him and he didn't appreciate to stop playing soccer. In the first place, his aunt, and then his biological mother took most of the decisions in his life. A1 rolled his eyes to clearly manifest that his parents decided that school is more important than playing soccer without asking his own opinion on that. He might have gone far in soccer now, since he had started playing as a professional by the time they imposed their choice to him.

Although A1 lived in a family where he is considered as a son and have two brothers, he was always thinking of his biological parents. The separation from his biological parents is an important event in his life story, and this determines his wellbeing. His biological father is critically ill and had been living in a hospital for long time at the moment of the interview, and his biological mother lives elsewhere in Germany, in Cologne. She is engaged a second time, but A1 had some stress with his stepfather. A clear distinction can be made on how A1 feel in his family and outside the family Atangana,

A1: [L 40-48: *„Also meine Familie bedeutet in erster Linie erstmal Stress. Weil ich habe immer Stress mit den. Und [...] so, wegen allerlei Sachen wie zum Beispiel wenn ich Party gehen möchte, lassen Sie mich nicht und so, und sag man so Stress. Und, auch wegen Fußball muss ich kämpfen und so was. Und [...] und da ich auf [Gym?] hin gehen muss [...könnte?], und auch in der Schule machen Sie...immer Stress. Egal was passiert immer, auch wenn man eine gute Note schreibt oder nicht. Dann hört man nur: „Ja Mal eine gute Note“, und so, „Warum schreibst du nicht so überall?“ und so [...Tiefes Ausatmen] Äh ja, halt, afrikanischer Temperament na?*]

A1 doesn't feel comfortable with the way his 'parents' behaved to him and the way they want to take the control over his life. He would have loved to be free of any constraint in the family and make his own decision. A1 had some communication difficulties with his parents, and he defines the family as stressful. A1 did not appreciate to feel controlled or not being able to make decision on his own life, either in outings with some friends, or on how to couple his sport activity with his studies. A1 didn't like the

way his parents dealt with his school performances. Even when he did well at school, they seem to not be satisfied because they expect better grades from him in each subject every time. He felt frustrated for his parents never congratulate him even when he scores good marks at school. For A1 this is the 'typical African temper' which has a very negative connotation in the mind. And he sees his mother as being tiresome. For these reasons, A1 did not like this side of his family experience.

On the other hand, A1 has many friends and his friends make him feel happy.

## II. Socialisation of A1 in Berlin

### 1) A1 hybrid identity

As a child with Cameroonian background in Berlin, A1 experiences the 'normal' German life outdoors at school or with friends. He enjoys going to school, where he has a lot of friends from Germany and also from other countries. At the same time, A1 experiences the 'Cameroonian' culture and education with the family at home. This simultaneous life between two different cultural contexts makes A1 develop very particular skills in Berlin. He struggles to fit to the 'German world' outdoors, at school or with friends for example by having a very good command of the German language, by having a lot of friends, and by going out with them often. At home he is under the pressure of his parents to improve his Cameroonian or African skills through the Cameroonian food, the Cameroonian language and the cultural values. Such a life in two very different contexts makes A1 has a split identity with a dual nature. A1 has many friends and he really likes and enjoys the life outdoors with his friends or schoolmates. A1 really fits in the social life in Berlin, because he doesn't feel different with his German friends and his friends from other countries. A1 has very good language skills, and this is the first barrier a person can faces in a "foreign" society. A1 has no problem to handle the German language like a native German youth would do, and A1 really enjoys his life in Germany.

Indoors, A1 is immersed within the Cameroonian culture in his family. His mother (actually his aunt) educates him in the Cameroonian way. She used to tell him that their

household in Berlin is called “Makak”<sup>8</sup>. Makak is their village of origin in Cameroon and their household has taken this nickname for them to better understand that the Cameroonian culture prevails. This point makes A1 feel like he lives between two different worlds because with the family he has the African life, and at school or outdoors with friends, he experience the European life:

A1: [L 92-122: „Also ich weiß es nicht wie man sich als Kameruner so fühlt oder wie man sich als Deutsche so Recht fühlt. Aber, ich würde sagen also [...] so hälftte hälftte, so beides so. Eine Seite habe ich so das kamerunische...[...hmmm hmmm] die kamerunische Kultur, Leben und so was, zu Hause so ein bisschen. Andererseits lebe ich auf der Straße ist es ganz anders, z.B. an der Schule ist es ganz anders als zu Hause. Immer [...] immer so zu sagen zwischen zwei Welten. Wenn man in die Schule kommt ist es immer Europäer europäisch, wenn man nach Hause kommt ist es teilweise auch mehr afrikanisch. Und da gelten auch mehr afrikanische Regeln als europäische. Und wie Tante A2. sagt: das ist ihr „Makak“ hier zu Hause [so zu sagen?]. Und da gelten die Regeln, die wie in Makak auch...zum Beispiel, typischer Regel für meine Tante ist, wenn sie redet, darf man nicht noch Mal diskutieren oder so. Das, also das gibt in deutschen Familien überhaupt nicht. Wenn die Kinder sogar, soweit ich das kenne, wenn ich bei anderen war so sollten sie sogar diskutieren, oder dürfen ihre Meinung sagen oder so. Aber das ist hier so nicht so der Fall. Also, man soll immer machen was sie sagt, auch wenn sie falsch liegt, dann liegt sie erstmal richtig, aber dann kann man das erst später [...] später dann, kann man gucken und versuchen das zu klären...muss man...irgendwie das später dann klären oder so“]

For A1, life at home with his family is a very different experience from the outdoor experience with his friends. He even compares his family life with the life in German families. His family life is typically African as he said, and he does not have the chance to express his own opinion in his family this is a tacit rule there. This rule states that his mother is ‘always right’. Which means that there it is no need discussing with her in any point because she is always right in her opinion. At this point, he compare his family to a German family life, and he ends up saying that German children have the right to express their own opinions and they can discuss with their parents. The son of family

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<sup>8</sup> Makak is a small village in the South-East of Cameroon, and the place of origin of the family Atangana

Atangana A1 misses the opportunity to freely express his opinions within his family. He feels like German children have the chance to do so. One consequence of this is that A1 spends more time outdoors, and this is a very thorny issue with his parents, who do not want him to stay so long and so much outside the family house. A1 prefers to be with his friends outside because he can better express himself with friends than in his family home. It can therefore be implied that A1 is looking for the freedom to openly express his opinion outside, because he had no chance to do so in the family. The interview with A1 clearly shows that he avoid the family house as much as he can, and this was the main bone of contention with his 'mother'.

A1: [L 274-392: "...eigentlich fühle ich mich ständig allein, weil ich denke, ich bin ein bisschen anders als sie. Also alle, also alle anderen. Und das sagen sie mir auch jeden Tag, dass ich anders bin als sie. Und, also ich habe überhaupt kein Problem anders zu sein als sie,...Ja also ich denke einfach anders, meine Grundeinstellung ist einfach anders [...] das hat nichts mit Europäer zu tun, das tun nicht alle Europäer. Also zum Beispiel zum Thema, ganz großes Thema [...] wo wir immer ganz komplett unterscheid ist mit Party gehen. Also meine Eltern sagen, also meine Tante sagt: ich soll nicht raus gehen, ich sage, ich kann raus gehen. Sie bedingt das aus meiner Schule. Ich sage das hat nichts mit meiner Schule zu tun, das hat einfach nur mit meinem youth zu tun, lass mich doch machen was ich will! Wenn ich zu Hause bleibe, was habe ich dann davon? (*schneller Redefluss*) Sie wollte, dass ich lerne, wenn ich raus gehe...habe ich auch Zeit zu lernen. Aber wenn du mich zu Hause zwingst da werde ich auch sowieso nicht lernen. Also zwingen zu bleiben weil ich sowieso nicht lerne, einfach aus Protest werde ich da nicht lernen! Und, es geht da nicht nur immer ums Lernen, weil ich meine wer lernt dann um 23 Uhr oder so? Es sei den morgen ist eine Prüfung. Aber wenn morgen keine Prüfung ist, wenn sowieso keine Prüfung ansteht oder so, kann man doch ausgehen. Wieso denn nicht?"]

Going out with friends and having fun is very indispensable for A1. His 'mother' does not necessarily approve of this and he is constantly at odds with her on this issue. Furthermore A1 says that this makes him feel lonely in the household because his parents do not listen to him, and they do not respect his opinion. A1 is an outgoing



young boy but his parents have not really accepted that. One reason why his parents want him to remain in the house is that he has to study. But A1 abhors being held under pressure for the sake of studies. He seems to know exactly how important it is for him to read his lessons, and he does not need so much pressure from his parents to do it.

The friends and the inter-action of A1 with other people outside the family play a very important role for him. This is one reason why he really enjoys escaping from the family nest. It appears like A1 is more likely to discover, better understand and integrate the German society to better fit on it.

On one side, A1 see himself as a Cameroonian child, when he describes his life in the family and on the other side, A1 claims to be fully German: [A1: L72 “...*Also dass ich sowieso die deutsche Bürgerschaft habe...*”]. Although A1 also see himself as a Cameroonian child, he does not miss the country as such.

#### a) Impact of the cultural values on A1

##### Solidarity

A1: [L123-135: “*also wie ich gehört habe ist es in Afrika so, dass man zusammen hält,. Also, das merkt man ja auch ein bisschen so, wenn man sieht so auf der Straße sieht, aus anderen, anderen Ländern durch [hmmm...] sieht, dann begrüßen der eine, und [hmmm...] es ist halt so, dass auch hier in der Familie so ein...sehr soziales Leben herrscht Also, zum Beispiel meine Mutter und meine Brüder und so sagen mir alle immer, dass die Familie und so zusammen hält und so, also was ich auch wirklich merke und so. Also das einzige was ich wirklich stark ausgeprägt sehe ich hier in dieser Familie ist, dass Alle sobald man ein Problem hat [Der Lärm einer kleinen Trommel- gemacht von dem 4 jährige] Alle versuchen das zu lösen und [hmmm...] alle versuchen halt dann, sie setzen sich zusammen wirklich um die Person, die ein Problem hat in der Familie zu helfen. Sie halten alle sehr zusammen, und ja [...] und sie sind dann halt so wie eine Einheit, wie so eine Mannschaft so zu sagen. Alle [...] alle für ein, eine für alle“]*”]

A1: [L 221/ Also mir ist diese Familie [...] Solidarität sehr wichtig]

A1: [L 335-340: „...meine Mutter hilft dann immer ein oder einen anderen mit Geld aus und so, überall in der Familie. Ich weiß es gar nicht mehr so genau, sie sagt mir das nicht aber sie hilft immer aus mit Geld, das weiß ich. Weil sie verdient Geld [...]. Und meine Mutter hilft andere Leute aus der Familie und [hmm...], deswegen bleibt nicht immer so viel Geld für mich übrig“]

A1: [L 351-355: „...aber es ist halt grundsätzlich so, dass sie nicht mehr so viel Geld hat, weil die Probleme sind irgendwie immer größer, werden immer größer. Zum Beispiel, unsere Oma war damals nicht sehr krank, und da musste man auch nichts für sie bezahlen und so. Also sie hat Krankheiten, also ich weiß auch nicht“]

Solidarity is an outstanding strong value in family Atangana as A1 recognized. Members of the family A support each other not only financially, but also morally and emotionally. In family Atangana, children belongs to the group or clan. There is no nuclear family as such, because they all feel part of the large family (biological parents, siblings, aunts, uncles, nieces and nephews). A1 for example was a single child to his biological parents, but he lived with his aunt, who has adopted him and she has two children for her own. The idea of adopting any child from the large family is to avoid that single children grow up alone, or as ‘poor’ children according to the Cameroonian mind-set. For this reason, his aunt adopted him to make sure that he grows up in a ‘normal’ Cameroonian household environment.

The family members in family A strongly stand together. This is an important point in the education that A1 received in the Cameroonian household he grew up in. And he could experience it with his parents. The biological mother of A1 for example works and she earns big money that she distributes massively to support family members financially.

For A1, his family is a very good example of solidarity, and he really enjoys this strong cohesion among his relatives. This positively influences A1 and he would like to practice and transmit the value of solidarity in the future in his own family as well. This experience of solidarity is such important for A1 that he already thinks of helping his relatives later on when he will find a job, because for him, family means solidarity. But this solidarity might have some negative points as A1 says. His mother always helps family members financially and with supplies. This has a direct negative impact on A1,

who thinks that after having supported so many family members, the remaining money is not enough to solve her own problems. For A1, the support of his mother to the large family is not necessarily a good thing because he feels neglected by his own parents. Given that A1 also defines poverty as lack of material goods or money, we can say that A1 feels poor because his mother financially supports her relatives, and does not concentrate in solving her son's problems. For A1, this is not a nice situation, because the problems in the family increased and his mother had to help more than ever before other family members, like the grand mother whose health is getting worse and worse. Therefore A1 took the example of his grand mother who was sick at that moment. This was not the case for many years, and his mother did not have to pay for his grand mother's medical treatment that was becoming more expensive with time. According to this, we can say that solidarity in family A doesn't necessary have a positive impact on the life of A1, who can be neglected by his parents, when the problems she has to solve in the family become more demanding and bigger. Because parents in family Atangana sacrifice the needs of their children in the name of family values, it implies supporting other family members first, even though it means discarding your own offspring.

### Family values

Important lasting belief and ideas shared by family members in family Atangana are related to the Cameroonian family values. Parents in family Atangana grew up in Cameroon and they have a very strong cultural basis. The values in family Atangana are about what is good and desirable or not in family Circles for all relatives. It was highly important for parents in the family Atangana to inculcate a Cameroonian identity to their children. And parents struggle to pass on these cultural values to their children. In the Cameroonian family, a child belongs to the community, and this is one of the first values that were transmitted to A1 in the family Atangana. This belonging of the child to the whole community would mean that A1 as a child with Cameroonian background in Berlin is also considered as a child of the community to which his parents belong to. Parents of A1 in family Atangana were active in the African community in Berlin at the moment of the interview in 2013. This means that A1 can be considered from other adults in the Cameroonian community in Berlin as an adopted child. The available values in family Atangana are very similar to those in other African families as the other

in family Atangana A2 said. This is the reason why family Atangana matched with the dynamic of other African families in Berlin.

Another value in family Atanagan was the respect for the elderly. This point appeared as a rule in the household of family Atangana. Because of this, A1 said that the typical rule of his mother is that she is always right. The mother in family Atangana (A2) didn't wanted to be contradicted by her own children. Implicitly this means that she wants, in her way, to pass on this value of respect for the elderly to her children.

Learning the mother tongue is a very central point in the education of the children in the family, although children do not really learn it the way their parents want them to. A1 has to learn his mother tongue with his parents but he shows a real disinterest on it. His parents talk to him in the mother tongue (the Bassa language) but he always replies in German. During the visit to family Atangana for the interview, the mother talked to him in German, and she explained the researcher that sometimes she has to speak in German to make sure that her son understands what she said. But for Cameroon parents in Berlin, the Cameroonian mother tongue is a very important family value that should be kept alive. In this point it should be mentioned that parents in family Atangana wanted to transmit their cultural capital through the mother tongue to their children. An example can be taken with the perception of child poverty as it is understood in Cameroonian languages. In the Cameroonian perception of child poverty through Cameroonian languages, only a single child is considered as a poor child. The viewpoint of child poverty issue in family Atangana is reflected in the BASSA language. For BASSA people, a poor child is a single child. A1 is an example of single child born in a Cameroonian family and considered as poor child. A1 is a single child to his biological parents, and his mother sent him to her sister A2 in Berlin, who has 2 sons, to ensure him a "normal" childhood. According to family Atangana, a child should not grow up alone, and for this reason, A1 did not have to grow up as a single child. A1 lives with his two cousins, and he considers them like his own brothers. A1 was able to differentiate between the European and the African view on this issue. For A1 a cousin in the European context, represents a brother in his family meaning. Parents of family Atangana had a Cameroonian cultural background that impacted on value they transmitted on their children according to the BASSA language:

A1: [L 24-33: „...bei mir, also in der Familie sag man aber, dass die Cousins auch die Brüdern sind, aber, also, mein kleiner Bruder A3. ist eigentlich nur mein Cousin nach europäischer Maßnahmen. Aber da ich mit ihm zusammen lebe und mich um ihn kümmere, ist er mir mehr wie ein Bruder als wie ein Cousin. Weil für zwischen ein Cousin und ein Bruder ist es immer so ein bestimmter Distanz und so. Ein Cousin ist mehr so, er lebt wo anders, er lebt bei ein [...] bei der Tante und dem Onkel, und der Bruder lebt bei einem jeden Tag in der Familie. Meine Zwei Brüder A3 und A4 sind halt zum Teil wie zwei Brüder weil ich jeden Tag mit den in der Familie lebe, und deswegen sind sie auch meine Brüder so zu sagen“]

The notion of family has a particular meaning in family Atangana: the parenthood has not got degree, and the kinship is a very social reality. All relatives are siblings or parents without any blood relation considerations. Human beings are valued in family Atangana, and parents widely transmitted this cultural value to their children. Any relative in family Atangana is considered as a direct parent, a child, a sister or a brother. A1 learned from his parents that cousins are also brothers, and aunts and uncles are also parents. For A1, this reality in his family, means that it is all about living together as a family. For A1 living together with his cousins, is an important factor that determines if children are siblings or not. And A1 considered his cousins like they were his brothers, because they live together under the same roof, and according to family Atangana cultural rules: they are siblings.

Family Atangana also values children as being wealth, and this is one of the values they want to transmit to their children. For children in family Atangana, having their own children in future is but a duty. A1 mentioned [L82: “Und ich würde da halt nur für meine Kinder arbeiten“]. This means that A1 already plans to have own children in future; the cultural value of having children, or to give birth is already established in his mind as a duty. His parents successfully transmitted this African value to A1 already. This value means that a human life without children is a waste and a pity.

## b) A1's life in the German cultural setting

### School

A1 is in the 12<sup>th</sup> class that means about to clear high school [*Abi-Bacc*]. He was scheduled to sit for his end of high school certificate (A Levels) at the time of the interview in 2013. But he was looking forward to postpone it because he did not feel ready yet. He wanted to sit for that exam when sure and confident enough to score very good marks. A1 was aware of the challenges at school, and he was also determined to work hard and score good marks. At this point, A1 did not like his school as compared to his former school. A1 was looking forward to attain his high school diploma the year following our interview. He expects to be better prepared to have good result in order to get admission at the university.

After high school, he plans to spend one more year and try to find out which are the opportunities offered and how to better make a relevant choice in his studies. A1 was not sure of his further academic orientation at the moment of the interview in 2013, but he thought of enrolling in a pilot training school. Although he did not yet have a dream profession as of the time of the interview in 2013 [A1: 178/ *“Ich habe auch nicht so wirklich ein Traumberuf auf dem ich arbeiten konnte”*].

A1 complained that his parents never congratulated him on his efforts at school. They were never satisfied with his school performances, and this is one of the points of disagreement between A1 and his parents. He felt that his parents put too much pressure on him over that issue. He have an example that at one time he got very impressive grades in school, and his parents told to him that it ought to be so all the time and not only once.

It should be noted here that A1 thinks he has so much stress with his family because his parents are Africans. One reason for that can be that in family Atangana, parents feel they are bound to put pressure in the way they bring up their children, because they face some resistance from the children particularly in cultural issues. For this reason, A1 almost feels harassed to stick to the cultural background of his parents.

A1 had a better experience in a school in another city. Since he moves to Berlin, he did not like the school he attended. Although A1 did not really like the school he attends he had a lot of friends there.

A1 already thinks of his future career. After the son Atangana (A1) levels his plans to make a long trip abroad for a year, to set up his mind about what he really wants to do, and how to go about it. He wanted to earn enough money with as less effort as possible.

A1 just realised at the moment of the interview that he had performed very well at school. For him the challenge with schoolmates becomes greater and even to get a chance at the university, he has to score very high marks. The maturity of A1 was visible for he made a clear correlation between his school performance now and his future job later. That is performing well now in school means paving the way for a good job tomorrow.

- Peer group

A1 had many friends, and he really enjoys to frequently go out although his parents dislike that. A1 would like his parents to show him their affection in a very expressive and different way, and not just by forbidding him to go out with his friends all the time. But as African parents, A1's parents in family Atangana are not used to publicly demonstrating their love to children. But they deal with their children with some 'codes', whereby one should decipher to understand. However A1 does not live in a context that can help him to easily understand this cultural inheritance. Since A1 does not understand the cultural background of the education given to him by his parents, through his friends he created a circle, a new world with new codes and values within which he would like to perform. For this reason, A1 has many friends from very different countries including Germans. Although the mother of family Atangana (A2) appears very strict to her son A1, he is convinced of her profound love of his family for him. This is a real cultural difference between his life in his family, and his experience outdoors with his friends.

Having built these very strong social networks outside the family is a particular aspect of A1's life of in which he works hard on. And he really enjoys having lot of friends. A1 says how much he loves to go out, and make party with friends. Given the opportunity, he would prefer to only come back home just to go to bed and sleep:

A1: [L361-363 "*...ich lebe nur nicht die meiste Zeit mit den zusammen (die Familie), sondern mit den Leuten, mit den ich draußen zusammen bin. Ich schlafe nur mit den so zu sagen zusammen und rede auch sehr wenig mit den zusammen*"].

A1 felt strange in his family and he willingly chose to have a life outside the family with his friends. A1 intensively enjoys life with his friends and wants to keep this

second life of him hidden from his family; A1: [L 367/ „...Sachen zum Beispiel, die sie nicht angeht geht sie nicht an“]. This barrier with his family shows that he wants to feel independent from his family to perform in the German society. He would not like to be influenced by his family on his friendships outside the family.

Basing on this, it can be state that A1 spends most of his time outdoors with friends and he really enjoys this outdoor life, probably because of the freedom he experiences outdoors with the youth of his age. He misses this freedom within his family, which can be difficult for a teenager.

## Leisure

Leisure is a recurrent discord point between A1 and his parents in family Atangana. A1 has some hobbies and his parents are not supportive to help him to enjoy them. This is one of the reasons why A1 considers the family to be first stress. According to A1, his family is in the first place a stress factor as he said. In a word, he does not feel free to do whatever he wanted to do in his life; that is going out with friends for example, or to continue playing soccer. At the beginning of the interview with A1, he mentioned his passion for soccer:

A1: [L 6-7: “...*Ich spiele gern Fußball, ich habe es professionnell gemacht. Habe dann aufgehört wegen der Schule, weil es wichtiger ist...*“]

A1 had to stop practising his passion, soccer, because of the pressure of his mother A2, who thought that school was more important than playing soccer. His aunt A2 played for A1 the role of a mother. This means she decides in his name and place just the way a biological mother would do. A1 started his interview by telling about his hobby. A1 really likes playing soccer and he was frustrated because his parents compelled him to stop playing.

The second passion of A1 is outings with friends. As with soccer, his parents also opposed their son's second passion. He always had to struggle with his parents, and particularly with his 'mother' A2 to go out. His parents wanted him to stay indoors and do his homework or read for his lessons; but A1 too opposed a strong resistance to that attitude, for he really enjoyed going out with friends. Given that A1 is not able to really



enjoy his hobbies as his parents always oppose him, A1 is more out to struggle to get the chance to enjoy his hobbies than really practising them.

## 2) Break of A1 with his cultural background in Berlin

### Freedom of A1 towards his family

A1: [L 357-363: „...Also, ich bin [...] ja, ich bin teilweise glücklich. Einerseits weil sie mich nicht, sie mich nicht die ganze Freiheit gibt, die ich brauche. [...] Ich bin nur teilweise glücklich in der Familie. Aber sie lassen mich nicht zum Beispiel so, ich meine, das ist ja gesehen wie in Kamerun, wenn man aus dem Haus geht. Und ich lebe nun nicht die meiste Zeit mit den zusammen, sondern mit den Leuten, mit den ich draußen zusammen bin. Ich schlafe nur mit den so zu sagen zusammen und rede auch sehr wenig mit den zusammen...“]

The freedom of A1 in the decision-making process in the family was not clear. A1 seems to be the only one making own decisions regarding his school issues and how to manage the other aspects of his life. But it also appears that his parents are the ones who make decisions concerning their children. And in that way who decided for A1 most of the time? A1 used to roll his eyes during the interview to indicate his uneasiness. He was not very happy with the decisions his parents took for him. The fact that A1 always rolled his eyes in the interview he gave for this research, is considered to be negative. It appears to be a sign of resignation and frustration for him. An example can be taken when he talk about his leisure activities. A1 said that he had to stop playing soccer to better concentrate on school, because it is more important. But the way he rolled his eyes when giving this information could mean that this viewpoint was from his parents and they took the decision with which A1 did not necessarily agree with.

The second point of disagreement in the decisions making process concerning A1 is about his outdoors activities. A1 really enjoyed going out with his friends to have fun at the moment of the interview. But his ‘mother’ has a different opinion on that, and this is a very recurrent conflicting issue in the daily family life.

The freedom to have one’s own opinion and make it weigh in his family was a big deal for A1 in family Atangana. Because he felt that way, his opinions and his voice are not

heard in his family. And this was a very frustrating situation for A1 which affected communication with his parents. A1 felt like his family does not have any influence on him. He accused his parents of not giving him the chance to express himself in the family like German children do with their parents. One result of that, was that A1 enjoyed the time spent with his friends outdoors much more than the time at home with his family. It seems like A1 was almost always away from his parent house all day long, to spend time out of the household because he felt more comfortable and respected by his friends outdoor. This might have consequences on his school performances, for he would not want to be compelled to do his homework or forced to stay at home when he wants to go out. This is such an important issue for him that he ends the interview still complaining on that, A1: [L391-192: "...kann man doch ausgehen. Wieso denn nicht?"]

### A1's poor mother tongue skills

It was particularly important for parents in family Atangana that their children have a good command of their Cameroonian mother tongue. Parents in family Atangana spoke the Bassa language to their children in the household with the hope that their children will improve their proficiency in the mother tongue. A1 does not really speak nor understand his parent's mother tongue. A1 is not even willing to take advantage of the opportunity he has to improve on that mother tongue in the household. His mother A2 recognised that she sometimes has to communicate with him in German to make sure that he has understood what she said. This makes a great difference between children and their parents in family Atangana in Berlin, since the parents like to speak their mother tongue and the children rather like to speak in German.

The conflict between A1 with his family might first be as a result of the absence of any ties with Cameroon, the home country of his parents. For instance, A1 does not particularly miss Cameroon or the Cameroonian languages. A1 does partly recognise that he is also a Cameroonian child, but he doesn't miss anything about Cameroon. He was born in Berlin and has his life there in Germany. Being born in Germany, the first language of importance to A1 is German, although his parents tried to make him speak their mother tongue. The experience of A1 with his parents in Berlin is not an exception, for all the children with Cameroonian background involved in this research could not speak their parent's mother tongue. However, language proficiency plays a

very decisive role in family meetings for Cameroonian households. For instance the language of communication during large family meeting of the Atangana family is the parent's mother tongue. This is an important transmission channel for their culture. A1 and his siblings felt excluded from family meetings because they did not speak and understand their parent's mother tongue. This creates a break between the first and the second Cameroonian migrant generation to Berlin.

### Generation gap between A1 and his 'mother' A2 in family Atangana

A1 and his mother A2 belong to two different migrant generations in Germany. A1 belongs to the new or second generation of migrants with Cameroonian background who are partly born in Germany. And his mother A2 belongs to the former or first migrant generation of Cameroonians in Germany. Most of them are the first migrant generations in Germany for they didn't have any contacts or family members when they migrated into Germany. These are enough reasons why some of the actions of A1 might not be understood of his parents in family Atangana. And this is the same figure case for his mother. This situation creates a lot of misunderstanding between both generations. A1 suffers from this frustration because the communication did not work with his parents. And this leads to permanent stressful discussion with his mother A2. For A1, it is not clear why his parents do not allow him to always freely go out and enjoy parties with his friends. A1 also had a problem with his mother A2 (actually his aunt) for he had to struggle hard to be able to undertake his hobbies, play soccer and go to the gym. School is also a major stress factor between A1 and his mother A2, because she never acknowledges his good performances at school. She never took times to congratulate him on his good work at school, but she just expects him to perform well through the years; for A1 this is a very frustrating experience in his family.

In spite of all this, A1 does recognize that behind these conflicts with his parents and particularly with his mother A2, there is much love in their relationship. A1 however wishes his parents in family Atangana to show him this love differently:

A1: [L 50-54: „...na ja natürlich weiß ich auch, dass hinter allen diesen Sachen, immer ganz viele Liebe sich steckt, aber manchmal finde ich, sie können sie auch anders ausdrücken. Ganz besonders meine Tante. Tata A2, bei der ich wohne, na ja, es

*ist auch ein bisschen anstrengend...aber, ja ich weiß, dass tief, ganz tief, ganz tief, sehr sehr tief im Herzen sie meint ja nichts Böses, also von daher...“]*

### III. The future capabilities of A1 in Berlin

#### 1) The outstanding German language skills of A1

A1 has perfect command of the German language. And having good language skills in German is a very important asset to perform one's capabilities as a child with a migration background in the German society. As we have got in contact with A1 for the interview, he first addressed us in German. And also during the interview, as we asked in which language he wanted us to use, he spontaneously said German. A1 felt comfortable to communicate in German. But given that his parents speak English and their Cameroonian language at home in family Atangana, A1 also says that he is comfortable to undertake the interview in English as well. At the end, the interview was made in German because this was his 'first language'. Conducting the interview with A1 in German was a very good experience. A1 manages the German language as native speakers do, and he felt very comfortable speaking German. It was the best option to make the interview with A1 in German, because it was the best way to allow A1 clearly express his viewpoint. A1 actually felt better in explaining his opinion in German than in any other language. His parents in family Atangana tried at home to communicate with him in their mother tongue to transmit him part of their culture, but it was very difficult because A1 was not interested. Many values can also be transmitted through the language and for his parents this was a very important point in the education of their children in Germany.

A1 has better German language skills than his parents did at the time of the interview in 2013. This point also showed how Cameroonian parents and their children in Berlin can perform differently in their capabilities in the German context. A1 for example can make very good use of opportunities in his future life as a result of his good command of the German language. This would not necessarily be the case with his parents, who have been living in Germany for long time, but did not have a good command of the German language. Having a good command of the language of the host country is considered a very principal asset for migrant families and their children (Bhalla & McCormick 2009).

## 2) Successful socialisation of A1 in Berlin: Capabilities of A1 in Germany

The social life of A1 in Berlin is also matter of interest. He was born in Berlin of Cameroonian parents, but he has good chances to give his best in the German society. The first main advantage of A1 in Berlin is his very good command of the German language. In fact A1 spoke the German language with the proficiency of a native speaker. A1 was born in Germany and in his interview; he underscores the fact that he considers himself German. This approach of his own life might automatically have a positive influence on him and on his environment as well. To be able to have the opportunity to perform very well in a society, you need to start with the language. Speaking German is an asset that can open doors in Berlin that are unknown or closed to people who are not able to adequately articulate themselves in German.

On the other hand, A1 was very satisfied with his life in Germany for he had many friends at the time of the interview in 2013. He had a very satisfying life outdoor in Berlin, but he had a more conflicting experience at home with his family. Socialisation is considered a means of his performance in the German context. As stated before, A1 had a lot of friends from various countries and including Germany. He has a more active social life in comparison with his parents.

The Capability of a human being is the ability to freely perform and obtain outcomes in life in the best possible way. A1 would make the best use of his Capabilities if he makes the best use of his assets in the host society.

It can be seen from the interview with A1 that he isn't free to make decision on his own life in the family. He always has to handle things with his mother A2, be it going out or undertaking his preferred free time activity (soccer).

A1 says he doesn't really have a dream job but he would like to earn big money in future. A1 can sit for a pilot school entrance exam or look for a freelance job. His main point about a job was to earn a lot of money with less effort.

The fact of feeling happy or not can negatively impact the way a child deals with the Capabilities he is supposed to have. A1 said, he doesn't feel happy in his family because he felt misunderstood. But it appears that A1 has a very successful life outdoor with his friends.

### 3) Abstract of the interview with A1

A1 was a sixteen years old boy with Cameroonian background living in Berlin with his parents. His parents come from Cameroon, but he is a naturalized German. His biological mother and his aunt (who brings him up like her own son) according to their cultural background, thinks that a single child is a poor child. They want him to fully integrate Cameroonian values intensively within the Atangana family and probably pass them on his own children later on. These values are solidarity, respect for the elderly, and value of a human being in the family. A1 hardly applies these African values to perform in the German society. He used his social skills to build a very large and strong network with many friends in Berlin. This result in A1 having a very active social life, which is an important asset for his future life in Germany. Another point is that A1 has a perfect mastery of the German language. This implies that the ability to have a very good command of the German language in Germany presents an essential advantage for A1 to succeed in Germany. Although he was still a teenager, he creates his own path in the German society, by perfecting his language skills, although his parents want to communicate with him in their mother tongue, A1 always replies in German. A1 had a lot of friends, who open him new opportunities to perform in the society. By this, A1 created a very strong network of social relations and fellows who will accompany him through his life and make him happy and better prepared for his future life in Germany. All these abilities increase the future capabilities of A1 in the German society.

### 5. 1. 2. Analysis of the interview with mother of family Atangana A2

(April 16<sup>th</sup> 2013 at 10:30am. Duration: #00:05:21#)

- Biography

A2 is the aunt of A1 in family Atangana. She was born in Cameroon for about 30 years ago, and she has 9 siblings. A2 is married, and she has been in Germany for about six years by the time of the interview in 2013. A2 has three sons and she was pregnant at the time of this interview in 2013. A2 lived with her nephew at her home, she brings him up like her own child. Professionally A2 is a technician in the civil engineering area and she was jobless at the moment of the interview in Berlin in 2013. The relation

between A2 and her son A1 (who is actually her nephew) was characterised by some difficulties, which can be classified as generational conflicts.

### Paraphrase of the interview with A2

A2: [L3-49: “Ok, I am Mrs. A2 from Cameroon [laugh]. I have been in Germany for six years now. And professionally I am technician in [hmmm...] the civil engineering area, but at the moment [hmmm] I am jobless. So, for the time being, I am a housewife, married with three children, and the fourth one is on the way [laugh]. Oh yes that’s all...Having children [hmmm] makes one to feel he or she is wealthy. And the fact that getting rich is not [hmmm...] what should I say? You must not get rich to be happy! Money doesn’t make one to be happy, money is not all. So the best thing we want for our children is for them to go to school, to be well educated, [hmmm] to be [hmmm...] have a career [hmmm] an important [hmmm] position in this country, and [hmmm...] to take responsibilities...[Hmmm] A child [...] ok, like us in Africa we think a child is wealth. When we have children, we think we are rich. Actually in one sense it may be so because [hmmm] may be at old age, if the children are well educated, and they have good positions, and [hmmm] they can remember that [...] they have parents, whom they can support, financially, and even [hmmm... ...] morally or, caring! If I should say so [...]. But here in Europe, the way Europeans look [hmmm] at children, they look at the children as [hmmm], not really being wealthy, they want to [...] they want their children to be well educated, and have positions of responsibility and to be independent, regardless of the fact that, the children will come back to them and give them any assistance, because here, from 18 years old, children [...] live on their own. And in some cases children will never go back to their parents, and [hmmm...] life is not sweet. I mean [...] We are Africans, if a child behaves like that to a father or to a mother, the child you have suffered for, then, I mean, the parent will always be in tears...[Hmmm] I am about 30 years old [laugh]. I think [hmmm], having four children of my own is enough. And [hmmm] I like children. I can support children in my family, even if I do not have the means or the opportunity to have them with me, but, if I have the possibility of giving them a special education of which every child will value in future, then I am ready to do that [Child cry]...[Hmmm] In Europe, it is so

*difficult to make so many [...] to have so many children, so [hmmm] I am happy if I have three, and [hmmm] if I had to be in my home country, Cameroon, then I may have as many as I can, [hmmm] because at least I know that my family member siblings will be of good help to take care of them. But here to get even somebody to take care of your child, it is very difficult. So, in one word, if one is in Europe, he has to make a family planning and strictly follow it [laugh] ...[Hmmm] I am in Germany, but not because I am really happy, [hmmm, laugh]. Well we are to make ends meet. So if I have the possibility going back to my home, to occupy a good [hmmm] position, or to work and earn some money, to be an independent woman, be a businesswoman otherwise, that would make me happy too. But for the time being, I don't think it is very necessary.'"]*

## I. The perception of child poverty of A2 mother in family Atangana

### 1) Being wealthy means having many children for A2

For A2, *having many children makes one feel rich or poor*. For A2, it can be said that wealth is a matter of human potential in the family and has nothing to do with material possessions. This is a very interesting finding in family Atangana, for A1 said before that being rich is all about money and material possessions. A2 had three sons as at 2013 when we conducted this interview, and she was heavily pregnant. A2 grew up in a very large family in Cameroon. She was strongly influenced by her Cameroonian cultural background and her former family life where she has 9 siblings. According to the 'African culture' as described by Joseph Ki Zerbo, African people like to make many children to feel they are rich. A human being is the very worth in the African culture. In the same way, A2 would like to have many children, for she is strongly influenced by her African background.

According to A2, having many children is a security for parents not to be lonely in their old age. As A2 stated having many children would give the guarantee that parents will never be abandoned or grow old alone. The point is to make as many children as possible to ensure as many opportunities as possible to be taken in care of, when they are in old age. Having many children then represents a kind of social guarantee. In A2's opinion, having many children would ensure her caring; moral and financial support in



her old age. This is called 'good education' she said. This is an education that can be given to children who take up the carrying role when they are adults because they can remember to take care of their parents. A2 thinks that the way children are educated in Europe, these children will perform individually in the society, and she did not want to breed her children that way. For her, children in Europe receive such an education that does not integrate them in the family throughout their life. To her, European children do not come back to their parents and hardly take care of them when they get old. These independent children are 'bad children' in her opinion. A2 argues that because parents have suffered for their children, these children have the duty to return the favour to their parents. If children do not remember their parents and run away from them when they become adults and these parents are old, this would cause real pain to these parents, and as far as A2 is concerned, she will always be in tears in such a case.

Furthermore, A2 loves children, and she would like to have as many children as possible, even though she lives in Germany. She thinks that having four children is enough for her in the German context, because it is difficult to find someone to look after them. But, had she been in Cameroon, A2 would feel like putting to birth as many times as she could, because she knows that her family will help her to take care of these children. Knowing that every child in Africa and in Cameroon belongs to the whole community, and not to a single family or to a person, she would expect help from her relatives if she had to make many children in Africa. For this reason, A2 limited the number of children she would have to four. But in Cameroon the home country where she grew up, she is sure, she probably would have had twice or three times as many children as she has in Germany.

## 2) The large family as a future asset for A2

A2 opines that a large family is a future asset. It is about parents to have as many children as it is possible. She thinks that parents would need to be taken care of by their children in future. This point is a very important one in the family Atangana. The children in family Atangana learned from their parents to assist their others relatives. The Cameroonian mentality, it is needful to make many children to ensure one's own care when ageing. Parents invest in order never to stay nor feel lonely when they

become old. A2 has a traditional view on this issue although she lived in Germany and gave birth to all her children in Berlin. She tried to breed her children with that particular view point, it is important saying that this cultural influence is a very important one, and it is intensively spread in the family Atagana.

### 3) Solidarity as an immutable family value for A2

The notion of solidarity is a core value in family Atangana and for the mother in this family A2. They do not only talk of solidarity as such, they also experience it in their daily life. Solidarity is dealing with relatives and supporting each other. The biological mother of A1 for example is caring for her family members because she has a well-paying job, she earns good money and can have many dependents among her relatives like A1's grand-mother, or some of her siblings who are in need of her helping hand from time to time. Solidarity in family Atangana also means strengthening ties between relatives. In family Atangana, relatives are more important than friends. For this reason, family members have to demonstrate their particularity by showing solidarity to their relatives when in need. The kinship remains very important at any moment in life. Solidarity is for example manifested in family Atangana, in the way the biological mother of A1 financially support her mother or other siblings regardless of the fact that she also have to care of her own son. For this reason, A1 says that his mother helps so many relatives that she no longer has enough money to meet her own son's needs. For the biological mother of A1, this is also a message for him to know that the family should come first, and the family is not only parents and their children but also grandparents, uncles and aunts as well as cousins.

## II. A2's Socialisation in Germany

A2 felt excluded from the German society in Berlin. She said she does not feel as belonging to the German society. A2 had been in Germany for six years by the time of the interview in 2013. She migrated to Germany to join her husband and to have a better life than she could have in Cameroon. This lovely dream vanished as A2 could not enjoy the happy life she was expecting in Berlin in having a great job. She came to Germany with the hope to enjoy life in Europe, but she was confronted by daily life

difficulties that frustrated her, because she was still jobless at the time of interview in 2013. The fact that A2 does not work in Germany makes her unhappy. For this reason, A2 did not exclude the possibility of going back home and building a good career later on. A2 does not feel happy in Germany but she had to stay with her family in Berlin. The unhappiness of A2 seems to stem from two reasons: the fact that A2 cannot have as many children as she would like to have in Germany, and also the lack of the good job she dreamed of when coming to Germany. A2 was deeply marked by this frustration since she did not speak German at all.

A2 made no efforts to speak German to integrate in the German society easier like her son did. The language barrier was a very big problem for A2 and it was seen on her social contacts since she has none. A2 had none or very less contact to German culture and she tried to breed her children in the Cameroonian way based on the Cameroonian culture she grew up in, because educational values in both cultures are different for her. A2 thinks that children who grew up in Europe will definitely not take care of their parents in their old age, but those who grew up with African values will do, because they are 'well-bred children'. In this she tried to transmit her cultural values to her children through the way she dresses and the food she cooks for them.

A2 values the Cameroonian values in Germany, and she expects her children to carry on these Cameroonian values later on. A2 has no opportunity or she was not interested on getting into contact with Germans to get an idea of the context she and her family live in. It can be said that A2 was not enjoying an active social life in Germany due to her lack of contact with people from the society where she lives.

### III. Generation conflict between A2 and A1

A2 has some stress with her children, and mainly with her son A1. The generational conflict of A1 and A2 seems to be a communication issue, for A1 really enjoys the outdoor life and his mother A2 dislikes it. A2 wants her son A1 to stay at home most of the time and learn, stay with the family, but for A1 it is not interesting at all to stay in the house all day long.

Mother of family Atangana A2 used to tell her children that the household of family Atangana applies 'Cameroonian rules. By this, she means that she would educate her

children the way she was educated by her own parents in Cameroon. A2 has many ways of transmitting her culture to her children through food, clothing and language. A2 mostly cooks African food, and wears African dresses to show her children where she comes from. Through this, she indirectly showed them their common culture and common roots. In matters communication in the family, it is the rule that parents in family Atangana use the mother tongue to address their children. As far as their son A1 is concerned, all this is not necessarily interesting for him. A1 didn't enjoy the food his mother cooks, but he loves what they serve in the school canteen. A1 didn't dress the African way because he likes jeans and he dresses like his friends did in Berlin, most of whom were not African. For the communication language in family Atangana, since parents spoke a language other than German at home, the son A1 always replied to his parents and to his sibling in German. And his mother A2 admitted that she needs to explain things in German to her children sometimes if she wants them to better understand what she means. For this reasons, it can be said that the children in family Atangana play a very important role in their own education for the mother cannot control the friendships they have outside the family set up, and the influence of these on their life. The children of family Atangana performed in two different worlds at the same time, and this is completely different from their parents who grew up with just one culture. For A1, who was born in Germany, and who has spent the whole of his life in Germany, it would be very difficult for his parents to give him the Cameroonian education as they wished. A1 felt different in his own family.

#### IV. Abstract of the interview with mother of family Atangana A2

The main regret of mother in family Atangana A2 has regarding her stay in Germany is the impossibility of having as many children as she would have loved to. She cannot make many children in Germany because she is not going to find anyone to look after them. A2 loves children, and she wished to have a lot of children in her life, but since she came to Germany six years ago, and had to organise her family life in the German context, she has to do with the German constraints. She has restricted the number of the children she could have to four, unless she finds a care taker for them. With this, she means if she could have some help on the child care as it is the case in Cameroon, she

might decide to have more children. Through having many children, A2 would feel happier and wealthy.

The dream of mother of family Atangana A2 for having a good life in German is no more for she does not feel like a full member of the German society, and she cannot make as many children as she would have loved to in Germany because of the constraints. At the end, it can be said that A2 is frustrated with his life in Berlin.

## 5. 2. Security in family: Analysis of interviews with family Bitchoga

This is the analysis of interviews with B1 and B2 from family Bitchoga in Berlin. B1 was a fourteen years old young girl at the time of the interview with her in 2013. She was born in Berlin, and lives here with her biological parents and her three siblings. Her parents originally migrated from Cameroon to Germany but she is naturalized German. B2 is the biological mother of B1 in family Bitchoga, and B2 was a housewife by the time of the interview in 2013, and B1 is her first child. In family Bitchoga, children have a very good relationship with their parents. For this reason, B1 and B2 were very good friends at the time of interview in 2013.

### 5. 2. 1. Analysis of the interview with B1

(July 3<sup>rd</sup> 2013 at 02:00pm. Duration #00:12:27#)

#### Biography

B1 was born in 1999 in Berlin. She was 14 years old at the time of the interview in 2013. Her parents came from Cameroon but they have been living in Germany for over 15 years at the time of the interview. B1 has never been in Cameroon and since she was born in Berlin, she felt German. All that B1 knew about Cameroon was from tales narrated by her parents. The father of B1 works in Germany as an engineer, and her mother was a housewife at time of interview. For this reason, B1 had much more time together with her mother at home than with her father. The father of B1 has adopted a child in Africa who was under his responsibility. B1 considered this dependent child as her sister.

## Paraphrase of the interview with B1

B1: [L3-167: „Also ich bin B1, [hmmm] ich bin 14 Jahre alt [...] und, komme aus Berlin, und wurde auch hier geboren, [hmmm]. Ich gehe [...] seit [...] seit ich [...] also, ich gehe auf eine bilinguale Schule...Also ich bin mir nicht ganz sicher, was ich machen will, weil ich mich für Finanzen interessiere, und auch [hmmm...] für Gesetze, um Anwältin zu werden, oder so. Medizin oder Pharmazie halt, also ich möchte vielleicht in die Apotheke Mal arbeiten, oder Ärztin werden, und [hmmm...] oder vielleicht auch ich weiß es nicht, irgendwas in Business, mal sehen...Ich möchte auch genug Geld verdienen, um mich gar keine Sorge ums Geld zu machen, oder wie komme ich um die Runde nach Ende des Monates...also ich fühle mich hier in Deutschland wohl, ich bin auch froh, dass ich in Deutschland geboren bin und auch aufwachsen kann, [hmmm...] weil [hmmm], ich weiß nicht, ich weiß nicht wie es wäre, wie es wäre ob ich jetzt in Kamerun aufgewachsen wäre...Weil in Kamerun hat mir meine Mutter erzählt ist schon so richtig, sie nehmen es richtig hart dran, aber hier in Deutschland ist es schon etwas lockerer...meistens fühle ich mich Deutsch aber nicht wenn ich schon mit meiner Familie bin...es gibt halt so Kulturen Unterschied und so. [Hmmm] Essen, Kleidung und so, und dann, und da merke ich da halt auch bei manchen Situationen, dass ich auch aus Kamerun komme...also ich glaube ich fühle mich schon als Mitglied der Deutschen Gesellschaft, weil ich [hmmm...] ich kann mich anpassen, ich fühle es nicht schwer mich anzupassen, ob es ums Essen geht, oder Kleidung, oder Verhalten...In meiner Freizeit lese ich sehr gerne. ... ich treffe mich auch gerne,...Und ich spiele Klavier, also ich habe da noch Klavier Unterricht...das letzte was ich gemacht habe, war Tennis, und davor habe ich Basketball, Fußball und Schwimmen gemacht.

Wenn es jetzt um schulische Entscheidungen geht, oder so dann beraten mich meine Eltern sehr, weil sie, sie wollen nicht, dass ich Sachen bereue. Wobei [...] sie wollen nicht, dass ich sage, ja hätte ich auf meine Eltern gehört, dann zum Glück, habe ich auf meine Eltern gehört, so weil sie, sie wissen ja, sie wissen am besten was gut für mich ist, und ja, aber, wenn es jetzt so um Klamotten geht, dann bin ich schon so: “Ja Mama ich glaube, ich weiß was mir steht und was nicht”; weil [hmmm] ich achte sehr auf mein Aussehen, und dann weiß ich auch, ob es so wirklich gut ist oder nicht...Also für mich ist Armut wenn Leute, also wichtige Sache, einfach nicht besitzen, weil nicht das Geld dafür haben, oder einfach nicht die Kraft dazu haben das zu machen. Zum Beispiel, es

*gibt Leute, die können einfach nicht arbeiten, weil sie krank sind und so, und, sie können auch nicht die [...] die [hmmm...] die [...] Heilung bezahlen, weil sie [...] weil sie ja zu krank sind, um überhaupt zu arbeiten und das Geld einfach nicht haben. Und auch die [...] viele Leute, sie haben, ich weiß es nicht, keine Häuser, wichtige, lebenswichtige Sachen haben sie halt nicht, und das, das ist für mich halt Armut [....] ich habe viele Freunde...die sind mir schon wichtig, weil ich gerne Sachen mit meinen Freunden mache. Ich bin ja gerne draußen, und wenn ich keine Freude hätte wird...es nicht so toll. Also von Kinderarmut habe ich nicht wirklich gehört, aber ich denke jetzt Mal, dass es Kinder die ohne, die noch klein sind, vielleicht, und die ohne, die dessen Eltern kurz [...] also gestorben sind, oder abgehauen sind oder so, und, die jetzt irgendwie selber klar kommen müssen, und um ein bisschen Geld zu verdienen und die haben vielleicht haben ein bestimmter Geschlusstatus. Meisten ist es dass sie Geschwister haben, um sie kümmern müssen und so“]*

## **I. Perception of child poverty by B1**

### **1) Material dimension of the perception of child poverty by B1**

According to B1, the notion of poverty includes: lack of money, basic or no health care, no work, or shelter. To her, these various aspects of poverty are very important sets in life and are directly connected to material, or financial means. For B1, being poor also entails that people do not have the most important basic things they need in life because they lack money to pay for them or they have no strength to work and get them. She gave the example of people with health problems who cannot work to earn the money they need to have a decent life. Sick people for instance would have to pay for the health care, and without a job, they have no chance to earn the money they do need for the medical care, or to meet their basic needs. B1 had the hope to have a good job later and earn good money in her future life, she dreamed of enjoying her future life in this way. This was particularly very important for her because she wouldn't like to have any financial troubles in her future life. This argumentation shows that the material dimension of poverty plays a very central role in B1's perception of poverty, and child poverty. B1 thinks that children without parents do not have the essentials they need to better improve in life. The needed parental care also depends on the material possibility,

and this is a connection to material needs and child poverty to orphans. The point is that if children have no caretakers, they will have to work themselves to earn some money to live on.

## 2) Wellbeing and happiness as basic capabilities for B1

B1 describes child poverty as being the situation of children without parents, child labour, or families with many children but with less means to take care for these children. B1 has a practical approach of wellbeing. For her to have the chance of being born and grow up in Germany is an important asset that is needed for wellbeing of children. She saw herself as a very happy girl in Germany. B1 cannot imagine what could have happened of her, had she been born in Cameroon because of what her parents told her from their childhood experiences in Africa. B1 thinks she is lucky for she lives in Germany and she really enjoys that. She also feels happy to have parents, and many friends. According to B1, the basic capabilities for children living in Germany include: having parents, friends, being able to be part of the German society through a good command of the German language for instance, and being able to identify oneself as belonging to a group. B1 saw herself as a happy human being in Germany and this is a very important point to ensure a good social life.

## II. Socialization of B1 in Berlin

B1 was born in Germany, and she had a very good German language skills. She felt as being a 'German' because she was born in Berlin and does not know her parents' home country of origin. There is no particular difference between B1 and other children in Germany for B1 was very free towards the Cameroonian culture. For example she does not feel the need to live the African culture in the way she dressed or the food she ate.

Although B1 has a large extended family, she says that she feels German most of the time. She remembers that she was 'also' from Cameroon in her life with the family. This point shows that her family may be making efforts to keep Cameroonian culture lively in the daily life. B1 was aware of her Cameroonian background in the lonely moments where she spends with the family. Otherwise B1 had a 'normal' social life in



the German context. She had a lot of friends and she could enjoy going out and meeting with new people. She didn't feel any difference with other children in her school or outside her family. She didn't struggle in her daily life trying to bring her cultural background on her social relations like her mother did. And she was happy of the way she lived. It can be noted that B1 developed a kind of dual personality that helps her to be able to better fit in both life styles at home with the family and outdoors with friends in the society. This hybrid skill is a valuable skill that is a determinant asset to help her succeed easily in the German society.

## 1) B1 hybrid identity

### a) Cameroonian heritage within family Bitchoga in Germany

In 2013, when this interview was conducted, the family Bitchoga has been in Germany for many years. Parents in family Bitchoga bred their children with Cameroonian values that they received from their own parents for they both grew up in Cameroon. We would just focus on two aspects of these cultural values.

- Solidarity

In the first place, as far as family Bitchoga is concerned, solidarity is a very important aspect in the way parents bring up their children. Family members and relatives have to feel and be like in a friendship club. The notion of family is not just a matter of direct parents, but it is also about the extended kinship. The parents Bitchoga wanted their children to know that family is a fellowship of common responsibility and a sharing community. The common interest of the large family is the continuity of kinship. This seems to be unpractical for family Bitchoga lives in Berlin. But, B1 also told from regular family meetings with the large family where all the relatives met together and discuss some family issues. The rule in family Bitchoga was that those who earned or had more money than others should support the needy financially or with supplies. For instance, the father in family Bitchoga had a dependent daughter in Africa. Furthermore family Bitchoga also helped relatives who were in Cameroon and needed financial assistance. The parents of family Bitchoga tried to transmit this sense of sharing and

communal living, so that they know that the family is something sacred and the solidarity among family members is a duty. Family Bitchoga also has other values.

- Family values

Family Bitchoga breed their children with African cultural values. The family unit had a very societal meaning. This means that parents in family Bitchoga tried to add on the values they transmitted to their children some of the cultural values they have got from their own education in Cameroon. In family Bitchoga the father has adopted a daughter in Africa in order to extend the family. She lived abroad, but she automatically was a direct member of family Bitchoga. By doing this, parents in the family Bitchoga gave a practical example of how their children ought to value the importance of a human being. For this reason, B1 and her siblings have understood the importance of having a large family and they have started planning to have their own children in future. As for B1, she already thinks of having children in future. Other values in family Bitchoga have to do with food because the mother is fond of cooking Cameroonian dishes; she wanted her children to feel Cameroonian through eating Cameroonian food at home regularly. By this, B2 hoped to make her children value the Cameroonian culture through its food. Another point that marks the cultural background in family Bitchoga is clothing. In family Bitchoga the mother, B2 dressed almost always in African attire. The idea behind is to signal the difference with German dressing codes. But her children can decide on their preferred outfit, they preferred to dress as normal as young children in Berlin do; that is in jeans and t-shirt.

Though B1 feels German, she recalled some precise examples of where her parents originally come from; and she realises that this African culture is also part of her. B1 feels happy in her family and she says that she would like a larger family. This point helped B1 to value human beings, and this can be a very important argument to help B1 have good social connections in Germany.

## b) B1's life in the German cultural context

- School

The interview with B1 was very open such that she felt free to talk of her life experience the way she liked to. The interview with B1 was very interesting because she started on introducing herself with her school curriculum. B1 was going to a bilingual school at the time of the interview, and she was learning three languages at school at the time of the interview in 2013: German, French and English. The interview with her was conducted in German language for she felt more comfortable in that language. A very interesting point with B1 was that she was making a connection between her school performance and her future career already.

B1 attended a bilingual school which is very interesting because she had very good language skills. In addition to the German language, she also learned French and English at school. B1 was in class five, that is the last level of primary school.

B1 also made a parallel between the school in Cameroon and the one in Germany for her mother told her that it was stressful to go to school in Cameroon in her days. B1 was happy and grateful to be born in Germany and to have the opportunity to go to school in Berlin. At her young age B1 is already aware of the challenge raised by school, and she has resolved to do her best she to score good marks and preserve the chance of a good career in her future.

- Peer group

Like some young people, B1 had many friends when we had the interview in 2013. Although her best girl friend left Berlin a couple of months before this interview, she continued to go out with her other friends that she had. The friend's circle of B1 was very diverse. She had friends from very different countries and German friends too. Many of her friends were from other European countries, from Africa or from the United states. One explanation of this might be that she visits an international school where she had the possibility to get contact to many other children from very various countries other than Germans. A large friendship set is a very important point to improve the German skill. For B1 her friends were very important to her. She would not have being happy if she didn't have friends. She said that she enjoys life outside with friends, and the many different activities they intended together, because she can just have particular experiences with friends together. Besides, B1 had a lot of leisure

activities for she was interested to make more friends, and better fit in the society by having a lot of social activities and having contacts to many other people outside.

- Leisure

The most important hobbies of B1 were going out with the friends, and reading. B1 was a very joyful young teenager and she enjoyed the life outdoor with her different friends. Although her best friends left Berlin, B1 had other friends with them she met and had fun outdoor. She really enjoyed the life with her many friends outdoor. B1 had some other hobby such playing the piano each week, tennis, basketball or soccer and swimming. At the same time she reads a lot and said that she can read a book through a day. The various leisure activities of B1 show her engagement to be part of the German society outside the family, with the different interactions this implies to other people.

## 2) B1's break with her cultural background

B1 said that she also felt happy in the family although she also really enjoyed the life with friends outdoors. The family for B1 was very important and she was not struggling against her family to free herself off them. Her family was very important for her to feel happy, and she had a very strong tie to her mother. It was important for B1 to ask for advices from her parents because she was afraid of making mistakes. She trusts the life experience of her parents, and she always rely on their opinion before taking an important decision, for fear of making mistakes that may jeopardize her future life. The need of B1 for independence from her family is more about the ways she dresses for example. Her mother (B2) dressed in a typical African way while B1 dislikes wearing African clothes like her mother. She wanted to be free to wear the clothes and attires that pleased her. B1 dressed like any other teenagers in Berlin, with no particular cultural orientation that is simply jeans and t-shirts. B1 has a particular relationship with her mother and she experienced faithful and trust in decision-making in the family. The unique failure in the transmission of the Cameroonian culture to B1 was the language. B1 was not able to speak or even understand the mother tongue of her parents.

- Poor mother tongue skills of B1 in the family

In B1's family, besides their Cameroonian mother tongue, parents have instituted English as another communication language. The children in family Bitchoga communicated with their parents in German. B1 could understand English but she liked addressing her parents in German for she felt better in that language. Even to communicate with their children, parents in the family Bitchoga had to speak German with them, for they needed to make sure that the children correctly understand what they meant. B1 didn't feel the need to improve the mother tongue of her parents for she didn't need this language at all. She could communicate with her parents in German, and all her friends spoke the German language. It appears more useful for her to better master German first, because that is the linguistic skill which is more relevant and pragmatic in her situation. And as a result, she had a very good competence in the German language, just like native speakers.

- Generation gap between B1 and her mother

B1 had very limited contacts with her father for he worked all day long. But she had a very good and close relationship with her mother. B1 specified that the only thing she did not want her mother to interfere in, was the way she dressed. She did not want to dress as an African woman the way her mother did. The reason was that she wanted to feel like a 'normal' teenager in the German society and identify with most of her friends. The other reason, she said, is that she felt German but with a Cameroonian background, she abhors to display any cultural connotation. And in comparison to her mother, B1 had a very active social life with other children from many different countries.

### III. The future capabilities of B1 in Germany

#### 1) B1's excellent German language skills

B1 had a very good command of the German language. She spoke German the way a native German national would do. For this interview, B1 was asked in which language she would like to make the interview and she decided to do it in German because she thinks and conceptualises things in German. B1 was free to choose the language of the interview and she spontaneously decided to do it in German. She spoke German like a

native speaker, and she was born in Germany, and feels German; it can be said that B1 is a native German although she has got a Cameroonian cultural background.

## 2) B1's Successful socialisation in Berlin

B1 said she did not feel any difficulties being part of the German society. She cannot imagine herself being marginalized within the German society. Success in human socialisation can value the capabilities of a person in a society.

The Capability of a human being can be defined as the personal ability to better perform in life with the means then available. It was obvious that B1 has a relaxed relationship with her parents, particularly with her mother. This is a very important and helpful asset that enhances the Capability of young people to excel in what they are able to do in the society. And B1 has a very good and an active social life.

On the other hand, B1 is a very ambitious teenager. She dreamed of very interesting jobs for her future. She wanted to be either a banker, a chemist, a lawyer, a business woman or a doctor. These dreamed jobs show that B1 felt free to think of a successful future life in Germany. With the dual aspect of her life, she will be able to perform very well, and make it in the German context.

## 3) Abstract of the interview with B1

We got contact with family B also through the Cameroonian embassy in Berlin. We first contacted the mother and she asked us to come any time we wanted in the afternoon or over the weekend. So we made an appointment for the interview with her daughter B1. B1 had a very good relation to her mother. She was a smiling young girl. She said she would feel comfortable speaking German or English, but she preferred the German language. She communicated with her siblings and friends in German. She wore a short pant and a t-shirt on the days of the interview.

Having grown up in Germany, B1 has a very different perception of child poverty compared to her parents. She only thinks of child poverty in terms of material belongings and wellbeing, whereas her mother defines it in terms of human potential. Her perception of child poverty also influences her ability to face challenges in her future live in Germany.

## 5. 2. 2. Analysis of the interview with B2

(July 3<sup>rd</sup> 2013, at 04:00pm. Duration: #00:06:31#)

### Biography

B2 was born in 1974 in Cameroon where she grew up in a very large family. At the moment of the interview, B2 was a housewife and she was living in Berlin with her children and her husband. B2 had 4 children, and had been living in Berlin, Germany, for 17 years by the time we had the interview in 2013. B2 comes from a very large family, she has 8 siblings. At the moment of the interview in 2013, B2 was still living with her family in Berlin.

Interview with mother of family Bitchoga, B2: [42-44/ “... *I don't miss home too much because I have my husband here, I have my children here, I have my siblings all over the world, I have very few relatives back home*”]

### Paraphrase of the interview with B2

B2: [L 3-67: “...*I am B2. I am 39 years old, and I've been living in Berlin for 17 years. I have 4 kids...Children are, they are an asset, and they make me happy...whatever they have, whatever your children have is yours...Wealth is having more than enough. You know, Having more than enough of [...] money...richness is not only money... to me as an African woman, you know, we believe that children are the wealth, you know like when you get older, they take care of you, if you have children that are reasonable, children who have succeeded. I was saying that wealth means having more than enough of what you need, it could be money, it could be assets, it could be children [laugh], I mean good children, you know, Well to have children, you know...Yes, I support them in, in whatever they are doing in school. I try to encourage them in the subjects that they do better, you know, that I see that they like. Because, I don't want to force them to do what pleases me. But I want them to do what I think that they like, they love to do. I believe in that. Yeah, because, I believe that, if you do what you love, you can better excel, you can have better results, than if you just do something because maybe people dreamed of it, or maybe you think you will get a job, I believe in dreaming what you really love, what your passion is. And I encourage my children to do what they, I see*

*they like to do, you know. And also, [hmmm] as a mother sometimes, they don't really know what they want, but you see, you see with a mother's eye what you understand better than they do. So you try to encourage them in that direction [...], in that direction...And [hmmm] after having been in Germany for so many years, you still feel like a stranger, you miss home but personally, I don't miss home too much because I have my husband here, I have my children here, I have my siblings all over the world, I don't have many relatives left back home. So I'm not really homesick, of course, I do miss home but not too much...I won't say, I am not happy, but I won't say I am that happy either, because after living so long in a foreign country, and you still feel like you don't belong there, it is something very difficult to handle, you know. Yeah [...], you will be reminded, something will make you to know that it is not your homeland, you don't belong here, so you always feel like a stranger. Everywhere you [...], like most of the time, when you, they ask you [hmmm] your nationality, [...or your....] they don't, they are not comfortable when you say German, and then they will say "Ah, I understand, but where do you come from?". For instance, if you are in a country like America, and you say "I am American" nobody cares, nobody wants to know where you come from, Cameroon or anywhere [...], but here it emerges every time, and they keep asking you "When are you going back?", "Would you like to go back home?", "When are you going back?" It makes you think that "Oh, this is not where I belong". You understand? They always remind you all the time, some body need to [...] you know try to ask you [hmmm]: "When are you going back home" "Are you planning to go back home?" Those questions show you very clearly that you are a stranger here and it is not very comfortable for us. Because, we have been here for so many years, you have your children here, you breed your children here, your children are growing here, and you still don't feel like this is where you belong. It is a bit complicated..." ]*

## I. B2's perception of child poverty

### 1) Wealth means having many children

Children are an asset for B2 and she is happy to have many children. Her family makes her happy, particularly her children. B2 thinks that, the more children you have, the happiest you can be. For this reason, B2 feel happy with her numerous children. She



thinks it is a blessing to have children. For B2 it is an honour and a good thing to have children not only for parents but also for the children too to have siblings. B2 imagines her children in future as people working in very different fields, she took the example of the profession that children can have. She took her own example with many children; she said she could have a lawyer, an engineer, a doctor, or an accountant in her household. One other reason for B2 to think her children are an asset for her as a parent is that, according to her cultural background, parents make many children with the expectation that those children would take care of them in return when they are old. B2 clearly says that having many children is also justified by cultural reasons.

For B2 being rich also means having more than enough of what you need. Following her reasoning, she would love to have more than enough children to feel wealthy. For this reason, B2 also support her children as much as she can, so that they have good school performances to better prepare for their future life. And she said that she believes in her children.

## 2) A large family an asset for future

B2 thinks of a large family as an asset for life for some reasons. It is first important for her being able to have many children with very different skills of specialisation and potential, for what belong to the children also belong to parents, not in the way that it belongs to parents, but more in the sense that parents can be proud of the fact that they cause it to happen by doing something good. The successful children should remember their parents, because they supported them financially, morally or also took good care of them when they were still young. Otherwise, those parents who have sweated and suffered for their children, will always be in tears if the children never go back to them, as things should be according to the African culture. This shows that parents too brought up their children in the right way. B2 tries to breed her children to be “good children”, not only regarding their parents, but also in view of their success in a future life. For her, good children are successful children who never forsake their parents when they succeed and being to care for them.

## 3) Solidarity as an immutable family value

Solidarity is a core value in family Bitchoga. The mother B2 considered solidarity in the way she was caring for her children now because they are too young to manage on their own, but in her old age, she would like her children to remember their parents and care for them in return; for it will be catastrophic if children were to ignore and deny care to their parents in their old age. This is an important point in the education B2 gives to her children.

## II. B2's Socialisation in Germany

### 1) Exclusion of B2 from the German society

B2 had been living in Germany for 17 years by the time of this interview in 2013, but she was still not feeling to belong to the German society. She said she was feeling more like a stranger although she had been in that setting for a long time, and had delivered all her children in Germany. Although B2 is established in Germany where she lived for a long time with her family, she did not feel like belonging to the German society. B2 has her life in Germany, her husband and her children, she does not have any close relatives in Cameroon anymore but she continued to dream of returning to stay there. B2 did not feel like belonging to the German society, and she had no words to describe this ambiguous feeling. For her it was complicated to describe the way she felt and why she lived outside and excluded from the German society. In the personal experience of B2 in Germany, she had to deal with some uncomfortable situations. For example, she abhors being regularly asked where exactly she comes from, or when she expects to return home, because she already has the German citizenship and would like to be treated and considered as such.

### 2) B2 enjoys her culture in Berlin

The visible signs that mark the cultural background of B2 are the way she dressed and the food she cooked for her family. B2 used to wear African dresses; the very day we had this interview, she was wearing an African gown. The reason is that she cannot give up her African culture, and because she does not feel part of the German society she particularly wanted to mark her difference by wearing African dresses. The second

point B2 is stressing on is the Cameroonian eating habits. Family Bitchoga almost regularly ate African or Cameroonian dishes. The aim for B2 was to make her children know where she comes from. The way people eat is a cultural vehicle, and B2 expected her children would feel Cameroonian because they eat Cameroonian food at home in the family.

### 3) Abstract of interview with B2

B2 was a very calm mother with a gentle voice. She was very hospitable. As I got in touch with her to ask for interviews, she gave us an appointment in the next weekend even before she could ask her daughter's opinion. B2 has some clear positions and stereotypes, like to her 'good children' means that if your children have a good carrier or do something good, parents will feel proud and happy, because it is the outcome of their efforts. This view point might not be the same with the children's. Because they were born in Germany where they are growing up. Even the expectation of B2 that her children will take care of her in the future when she is old is not necessarily the same opinion that her children have, for the children know that the state will take over.

B2 made no mention of any friends of her in Germany.

## 5. 3. Sharing spirit within the family: Analysis of interviews with family Camto

This will be an analysis of the interviews with C1 and C2 in Berlin. The family Camto has been living in Berlin for over 10 years. C1 was a young girl of 13 years old at the moment of the interview in 2013. She was born in Cameroon, and she migrated to Germany to join her parents two years before the date of this interview 2013. She lived in Berlin with her biological parents, and her two siblings. Her parents come from Cameroon, and she still had just the Cameroonian citizenship at the moment of the interview.

### 5. 3. 1. Analysis of the interview with C1

(July 16<sup>th</sup> 2013 at 04:00pm/ Duration: #00:11:00#)

## Biography

C1 was born in Cameroon in the year 2000. She was 13 years old at the moment of the interview in 2013. C1 came to Germany to join her parents. She has been in Germany for only two years when the interview took place in 2013. But the way she managed the German language was outstanding. C1 decided to give this interview in German, and she spoke German free from any accent like a native speaker.

## Paraphrase of the interview with C1

C1: [L 3-152: „Ich bin C1, ich bin 13 Jahre alt, und gehe in die X Gymnasium, und bin in die 7. Klasse...Ich bin in Deutschland seit vor zwei Jahren, und ja, gleich da war ich 11 oder so...Also ich finde hier in Deutschland besser wenn man, [hmmm....] also zur Schule geht...Ich habe viele Freunde. [Hmmm...] also ich kann jetzt nicht zählen, aber ich habe schon ziemlich viele Freunde. Also ich habe auch, [hmmm...] also ich habe deutsche Freunde, ich habe afrikanische Freunde, und die meisten meiner Freunde sind meisten Ausländer. Also sie kommen aus andere Länder, zum Beispiel...Türkei, oder Griechenland oder Kroatien, ja. Also [...hmmm] meine Freunde sind sogar [...], manche sind auch so alt wie ich oder, manche sind jüngerer: 11 Jahre alt, oder ein bisschen mehr. [Hmmm....] also jetzt gehe ich schon im Gymnasium, da kann man die Abitur machen, und nach der Abitur, möchte ich gerne ja studieren, und später mal eine Rechtsanwältin werden, oder wenn nicht eine Augenärztin werden, ja, damit ich ja auch bisschen [...] ja, viel Geld habe, um meine Eltern zu unterstützen...ich gehe schon [...] schon sehr mit meinen Freunden raus..., ja. Also manchmal gehen wir halt so, so einen kleinen Jung Zentrum, also sehr für Teenager. Da kann man ja auch viele Freunde finden, oder laufen einmal durch die Straße, gehen zum Spielplatz oder so für kleine Kinder, ja. Also [...] normalerweise lese ich gerne...So ja, wenn wir schon Ferien haben, gehe ich ja auch wo, so [...] schwimmen oder [...hmmmm....] ich gehe Freunde besuchen auch ja so [hmmm...] Jungen Zentrum oder wir gehen so zu einem Tanzclub,...ich habe schon ja Freunde, die auch ja zwar in die gleiche Schule gehen, aber ja, [hmmm...] zum Beispiel sehr viele Jungs, und ja ich habe, ich glaube nur zwei Mädels oder so, sie gehen zur gleichen Schule. Aber die meisten sind Jungs, aber ich bin auch mit den zufrieden...wenn ich mit meinen Freunden raus gehe, da zum Beispiel, wenn wir [hmmm...] einfach rausgehen, ja, ich bin ja nicht so schüchtern, also ich gehe

*[hmmm...] ja zu den Leuten, und frage so wie alt sie sind, oder den Namen Fragen, oder in welche Schule sie gehen, und ja manchmal wenn sie mich schon antworten, dann bekommt man, da haben wir mehr Kontakt, bekommen wir auch Telefonnummer, und ja...Also zu Hause spreche ich schon Deutsch, aber meine Mutter rede ja Englisch, ich rede ja auch Englisch; aber meistens, wenn sie English, [hmmm] mit mir Englisch redet antworte ich in Deutsch...Also [...] ich, also ich fühle mich eigentlich wohl in Deutsch [...] in Deutsche sprechen, ich fühle mich auch wohl in Englische sprechen, aber in Deutsch bin ich ja halt ein bisschen wohler zu sprechen.. Unter Armut, habe ich eigentlich nicht so viel zu sagen. Armut [...] ja, ist zum Beispiel, ja Leute, die jetzt vielleicht kein Essen haben, oder keine Häuser haben, oder [hmmm...] unter Armut verstehe ich aber nur Leute, die [...] ja, kein Essen haben und Häuser zum Leben haben...Also wie ich mich ein armes Kind vorstelle, ist ja ein armes Kind, das zum Beispiel kein Essen hat, oder sie ist, ja [hmmm...] jetzt ist krank, weil sie zum Beispiel [hmmm...] wegen Essen jetzt krank ist oder so, oder keine Medikamente bekommen wenn sie krank sind, ja. Eigentlich so würde ich mich es so vorstelle ein armes Kind...Also Kinderarmut eigentlich kenne ich gar nicht“].*

## I. C1's perception of child poverty

C1 keeps a good distance between her and the reality of poverty. The way she described child poverty shows that she did not want to be identified as being poor. She imagines a poor child, as the one without food, who eventually becomes sick; or children who do not have access to medical care or drugs when needed. C1 spoke of poor children like a reality she did not know and she ended up saying she had never had to do with child poverty. C1 focusses her own experience of poverty on the need for electronic appliances. For it was very important for her to own a cell phone, an Mp3 or a computer that she would have for her personal use. C1 admitted that she longs to have these electronic appliances at her reach, otherwise she will feel poor. The reason on that is that, C1 has many friends, and would like to have the same appliances and gadgets as her friends. And she makes the comparison, for in her school, very young child has a phone and she deems she is mature enough to have a phone of hers.

So it can be said that the experience of poverty of C1 was first focussed on material goods. It would be interesting to know if she would have had the same point view had she been in Cameroon. At this point, it was clear that C1 did not feel poor because she owns many of electronic appliances she desires. She expresses her pride in wanting to own a phone, a computer and an iPod, or a 3player. All these electronic jewels will make up her pride, it shows that C1 has a high interest to stay in touch with her friends outside the family. The phone and the computer for example are electronic appliances she necessarily needed to keep contact with her friends or schoolmates. She also says that this is important for her either to listen to music when she is alone and bored, and she can also always contact her friends through calls or chats. C1 says that she does not know poverty as such for she grew up in a good family. For her, her family gave her all that she needed and she has no experience of poverty. In this point, C1 is only dwells on the material dimension of poverty. And at the end, she concluded by saying that poverty was a matter of lacking food or shelter.

## II. C1's socialization in Berlin

### 1) C1's hybrid identity

#### a) Cultural heritage in family Camto

- Solidarity

C1 lived in Berlin with her parents and her 2 siblings. She had the first part of her childhood in Cameroon. She said that she had a very good experience of the solidarity in her large family with the aunts and uncles there. She could remember how helpful her relatives were for her at school and in the family. Now C1 thinks to help her entire family left back in Cameroon. She spends the first steps of her childhood without her parents in Cameroon, but her relatives took good care on her. Now she might well know the importance of being member of a very large family and she knew the value of solidarity very well. She always had good memories of her family in terms of help or financial support when she was still younger. In the interview she states the hope of having the opportunity to help her relatives in return. For her, this is the best way to give her relatives back what they were giving her before.

- Family values

The family Camto was struggling to keep its cultural values safe. The first important point for the family Camto was to value the importance of relatives. This is reported by the experience of C1. The family is something sacred and C1 has understood it already. She experienced how relatives in her family stood together to breed her. She spent the early stage of her childhood in Cameroon alone without her biological parents. And there, she had the opportunity of enjoying the solidarity prevailing in her large family. C1 was alone in Cameroon when her parents migrate to Germany and some family members took care of her there until she was able to join her parents in Germany two years prior to the interview in 2013. This dynamics of the large family standing together is a very important characteristic in the family Camto.

#### b) C1's life in the German cultural context

- School

C1 was in form 2 at the time of the interview in 2013. She was in high school, and she dreamed of going further in her studies because she had great ambitions. C1 had school experience both in Cameroon and in Germany. When she made the comparison between both systems, for her school in Berlin in Germany is very good, she can learn much more than she could expect in Cameroon. And one important point she also mentioned was that the school is free of charge for her in Germany, which was not the case in Cameroon.

C1 also uses school as a social environment to make as many friends as she could. School is the place where she met most of the friends that she has, and she really enjoyed to have so many friends. There is an advantage in getting in touch with many other children for C1, because that way, she better improves on her German skills. In the same way, C1 makes efforts to speak German without accent to be understood by her friends. And this is an important motivation for her to well improve her German skill. It can be said that friends are a very essential factor for the socialisation of C1 in Germany. Her friends help her having a very active social life. At the same time, her friends help her make efforts to better fit in the German society.

- Peer group

C1 had many friends from many different countries. She said that she had so many friends that she was not able to remember them all. At the moment of the interview in 2013, C1 had been in Germany just for two years, and the strategy to have many friends might be the best one to introduce her in the German society. C1 had many friends coming from Germany or from other countries. Having so many friends around was a very important thing for her to feel happy. In short, for C1, her friends are a very important element that help her better perform in the German society. The example with the language skill by C1 is taken for it is a very impressive one. She does not like to be set apart at school or anywhere else, and she really struggles do not feel different among her friends. With her life outdoors, C1 fits in the German context better than her parents did, and she really enjoys this. For example, she had in very short time much more social contacts in the German context than her parents had. And secondly she had best command of the German language than her parents did. Which is a very important asset to well perform in German society.

- Leisure

C1 had many friends and she really enjoyed going out with them. She has many hobbies from sport activities to going out with her friends. She also enjoyed collective activities like swimming, dancing or soccer. She also was visiting a youth centre during her free time. For her, this is a very good possibility to go out, and make more friends. C1 describes the way she looks for contact with other young people when she goes out. It seems this plays a very central role for C1 to have a lot of friends in Berlin. This might be her way to better integrate the German society.

C1 had a passion for electronic devices because she enjoys listening to music, or phoning with friends. She also liked the various games in her computer. C1 liked electronics like any modern youth. And she used her electronic appliances to keep in touch with friends, or to enjoy music.



## 2) C1's break with her cultural background

- Freedom from the family

C1 did not have a particular interest to set a distance with her family. But she wanted to have her own room at home to have a private sphere of hers. For she was a teenager, she wanted to be free to stick posters in her room and listen to loud music as she would like. Her mother did not want her to stick posters on the wall, because it is childish, but C1 did not care about that. She wanted to be free to decide on how to fix her room. Thus, freedom from the family that C1 wanted was just a matter of having her own private sphere inside the family.

- C1's poor mother tongue skills in the family

For C1 had been in Germany for just two years at the moment of the interview, it was very impressive to see that she was able to perfectly handle the German language. The point is that C1 has so many friends that she always had a possibility to improve on her German skills. The communication language of C1 with her mother was English. Her parents were also able to speak their mother tongue, but they were now forced to communicate with their children in German for their children had no interest improving on the other languages spoken in their family. C1 rather prefers to address her parents in German language. She confessed to really feel comfortable in the German language to be able to easily speak when she communicates with her friends. And she said that when her mother speaks in English to her, she used to reply in German. And for her mother to make her better understand things, it is better to explain in altogether German.

## III. The future capabilities of C1 in Germany

### 1) C1's wonderful German language skills

The wonderful German skills of C1 after a short time being in Germany is a very important asset to better perform in the German society. She used the German language as native speakers did. C1 would not have the language barrier in anything she would attempt in Germany. C1 also has many friends, and she enjoys going out with her friends. This was very helpful for her to practice and improve on her language skills and

to have an active social life. For C1, it is very important to have many friends and not appear different in her friendship circle. She tried to speak German like native Germans children do, because she also has German friends, and she did not want to speak differently. She was afraid to create a distance between her and her friends. She struggled to be accepted by her friends, this is the reason why it was important for her to really master the German language. This is a very important asset to better perform in a society. And C1 had very good chances to fit in the German society through the language.

## 2) Successful socialisation of C1 in Berlin

C1 had many friends. She had perfectly fit in the German society with so many friends from very different backgrounds. Socialisation simply means the adaptation process that C1 had undergone in order to acquire key life skills to insure that she can communicate in the social group she belongs to, and that she is happy and confident in the German society. This involved having pleasant social interaction not only in the family, but also with friends and schoolmates. At the moment of the interview, C1 had a very pleasant social life and she really enjoyed that. It can be said that this is a very important basic asset that would matter in the future social performances of C1. This point sets a difference between the social life of parents and the children in family C. For instance, C1 is more open-minded than her mother and father in Berlin, and C1 has a lot of friends. And this is a good start of a successful active life in a society that is valuable. C1 has very good chances to better fit in the German society for she had good social networks.

## 3) Abstract of the interview with C1

C1 felt happy in Germany and this can be seen in the way she performed in the German society: she has many friends and she enjoyed her life in Berlin. It was a meaningful opportunity for her to be in Germany and to have the privilege of going to school in that country. C1 had a timely experience in Cameroon and a recent one in Germany and she could compare both with regard to her personal life. She felt that it is better to go to school in Germany. And she hoped to learn a lot in her school in Berlin. C1 has very

good chances to have a happy future life in Germany. She was very happy with her many friends. C1 comes from a large family, and the main reason why she was anxious about having a lots friends might be her way to rebuild a kind of new family in order not be lonely in her new social environment.

### 5. 3. 2. Analysis of the interview with C2

(July 16<sup>th</sup> 2013 at 06:00pm. Duration: #00:27:57#)

#### Biography

C2 was born in Cameroon where he also grew up and was over thirty years old at the moment of the interview in 2013. C2 was living in Germany since 2000, and he has been living in Berlin for almost 13 years at the moment of the interview in 2013. C2 lives with his family in Berlin, he was married and he had 3 children. C2 had studied politics, and he grew up in a large family in Cameroon with his parents, siblings, aunts, uncles, and cousins in Africa in Cameroon. But for C2, the meaning of family has shifted in the African mind, and at the time of the interview, he said that for him, his family was his wife and his children. For C2, the close family members make him happy. He felt like he cannot live without his family, and his family gives meaning to his life as a member of the society.

#### Paraphrase of the interview with C2

##### I. C2's perception of child poverty

##### 1) Richness means to be married and have many children

C2: [ L-262-262: „Bon! Je dirais, si on le veut, je suis riche, j'ai [...], une femme, des enfants, et j'ai pu avoir accès à l'éducation et mes enfants aussi aujourd'hui“]

For C2, being rich is not a material issue, but it has to do with human beings. For C2 for example, his family represents wealth. For C2, having a very large family is an important asset. His family gave substance to his life. C2 grew up in a large family and for him it was a very important point to build his own family. For C2, being rich is to have people around us. That means in his acceptation having a wife and children. This

is the reason why C2 felt rich, because he had a wife and three children. Furthermore, C2 felt important for having been to school. Education was a valuable asset for C1, and he was happy to have had such opportunity just as his children did. C2 couldn't imagine his life without children, and he was very proud to have three children and a wife. Although he underscores the relativity nature of wealth; for him, the most important thing in life was to have children and build a large family.

## 2) A large family an asset for future

C2 had a large family and for him, this was an asset that made him happy. C2 distinguished the family in two parts: his original family or that is the family he grew up in, and his own family, that means the one he constitutes with his wife and children now. A family is very important for C2 because it is the first stage of socialisation. And C2 compared his wife and children to the sun shining in his life. He cannot imagine his life outside or without his family. For C2 a large family brings joy, happiness and it always has a positive image on his view. And this large family has some values that make its substance.

## 3) Solidarity as an immutable family value

Solidarity was one of the most important value that C2 would love to transmit to his children, because his parents also gave him the same education. C2 tried to teach his children African solidarity because he is an African. For C2, African solidarity was a strong principle of life he can never give up. For C2, the African solidarity allows people to be human. This African solidarity is a way to share with to others. C2 experienced this African solidarity in Cameroon, and he wanted his children to be able to help others if need be. C2 was financially helping his siblings, nieces or nephews or parents, by sending them money at home.

# II. C2's socialisation in Germany

## 1) The participation of C2 in the German society

C2 felt as being part of the German society. He belongs and takes part in activities in the Germany society. C2 felt fully integrated in the German society with his family. And C2 was happy every day in Germany, because he has his wife and his three children in Germany. And he believes that his children had better future opportunities in Germany than they might have got in Cameroon. The love of C2 for his family in Berlin may have an impact in the way C2 performs in the German society. C2 said he did not felt uprooted for living in Germany. He tried to respect the German law to live in peace in Germany. Although he is a migrant in Germany, he made his best to integrate in the German society. C2 assumed his culture as African he said. His wish is to continue being an African although he really wants to feel part of the German society. C2 had an African life in Berlin: he wore African clothes, he ate African food and he enjoyed African music. For C2, it is very important do not lose one's own identity even when living abroad. C2 had a good command of the German language, but he chose to have this interview in French which is his first language.

## 2) Abstract of the interview with C2

C2 couldn't imagine moving to a different country or returning home with his family. C2 originally comes from Cameroon, but he was proud of his German citizenship and he made the decision to settle in Germany for life. He did not want to go back to Cameroon, because he did not feel like being bound to his home country. C2 migrated to Germany since over 10 years at the moment of the interview in 2013, and he had acquired the German citizenship. C2 said his African culture was not negotiable, for he was a proud African and at the same time he wanted to be remain fully integrated to the German society. C2 strived to give a mixed education to his offspring. For this reason he took into account both, the African and the European culture in educating his children.

## 5. 4. Sociability as value in family: Analysis of interviews with family Deumaga

This is the analysis of interviews in the family Deumaga with D1 and D2 in Berlin. D1 was a young boy of 11years old at the moment of the interview in 2013. D1 was born in

Berlin. He lived with his biological parents and his brother in Berlin. His parents were from Cameroon, but he had the German citizenship. D2 is his father, and D1 had never been to Cameroon at the time of the interview in 2013.

#### 5. 4. 1. Analysis of the interview with D1

(July 14<sup>th</sup> 2013 at 05:00pm. Duration: #00:08:29#)

##### Biography

D1 was a young boy born in July 2002 in Berlin, Germany. D1 was 11 at the time of the interview in 2013. At that time, D1 was living with his two biological parents and his brother in Berlin. His parents were not married, but they live together with their two children in Berlin.

##### Paraphrase of the interview with D1

D1: [ L 3-73: „Mein Name ist D1 Ich wurde am 10. Juli 2002 geboren, ich lebe in Berlin...Also ich glaube arme sind ja, arme Kinder und so, und die brauchen Essen, Trinken und Verpflegung. Und wenn ich davon höre, denke ich, ich muss auch was geben, und auch was gut ist tun, und ja...Zum Geburtstag, da wollte ich ein bestimmter Art von Schuhen, da hat mein Vater gesagt, dass [hmmm] die viel teurer sind, als seine Schuhe, weil seine sollen 30€ sein, und meine waren so ungefähr 100€ oder 80€, also kommt schon darauf an welche, und da [...] da hatte gespart, um auch ein Teil daran zu bezahlen, und da hat er gesagt, ich muss erstmal sparen, und dann wird er da, den Rest dazu tun und dann werden wir sie kaufen. [...]. Und da habe ich mich ziemlich arm gefühlt, weil ich kein Geld hatte, und nichts gespart hatte...Ich bin ein Mitglied von [hmmm] Sport Club Siemensstadt hier hinten, und das macht auch ziemlich Spaß, weil wir da leicht Athletik machen, weil ich auch ein der besten bin, und ja...Und ich will einmal der beste Leichtathlet der Welt werden. Also, es kommt schon drauf an was es ist, und zu Leichtathletik haben sie [die Eltern] ja gesagt, und auch zu Computeringenieur, weil mein Vater ein ist, dann wollte ich auch, das werden, weil er da auch Geld verdient, und ja, dann, dann treffen manchmal meine Eltern die Entscheidung, oder manchmal ich...Ich habe auch viele Freunde. Und, die sind halt nett zu mir, und [hmmm...] Ohne meine Freunde, glaube ich, wäre ich nicht so weit

*gekommen wie jetzt... Ich fühle mich Deutsch, weil, [hmmm...] meine Eltern kommen zwar aus Kamerun, aber ich war noch nie in Kamerun “]*

## I. D1's perception of child poverty

### 1) Material dimension of D1's perception of child poverty

For D1 child poverty is exclusively material. He said that poor children are those who lack food and drink, who really need care. And for D1, when he hears of poverty, he wants to help because he does not consider himself as being a poor child. He spoke of child poverty from a very clear distance, to mark the difference between his sayings and his own life. D1 said that he would like to help poor children, not because he is rich, but just because he thinks to have enough to share with other children who have nothing. D1 means by this to share his books, his toys, or his clothes with children who might be in need. D1 could remember that he felt poor and sorry once, because he did not get an expensive pair of shoes on his birthday. This is also an example that illustrates his perception of child poverty, solely in a material framework. Another important point for D1 not to feel poor is having lots of friends. D1 truly enjoyed life with his friends in Berlin.

### 2) Wellbeing and happiness as basic capabilities for D1

D1 felt happy in Germany though he made the difference between different moments in his life when he could feel sad or not. It is important to note that D1 made a link between his happiness and his friends. D1 feels happy for he has many friends who encourage him to give his best when he performs in sport or in school. He has won some medals in sport activities with the help of many different friends of his. It can be said that the motivation factor of D1 is not necessary come from his family, but outside the family. In his interview, D1 did not mention his brother. But made many references of his friends outside the family. He said that he felt happy with his friends. His friends were a motivating factor in his life. It might be said that D1 has a highly fulfilled social life.

## II. Socialization of D1 in Berlin

### 1) D1's identity

The particular case of D1 shows that he did not have any connection with the Cameroonian culture. This means that any influence on his life could not be found in the cultural background of his parents. He was quite young and already had very much social activities outside the family. It cannot be said that D1 had a particular connection with the Cameroonian culture. Family D had a Cameroonian background but the children in this family were not traditionally educated. D1 for example felt German, and he had never been to Cameroon. Even the way he dressed or his favourite food had nothing to do with Cameroonian ones. D1 had no strong cultural influence from his parents. For this reason, D1 did not give the feeling that he had to struggle in society to make a difference because of his cultural background.

He communicated with his family in German and he felt like a native German. For these many and various reasons, it can be said that D1 broke with the culture of his parents and he created his own with various influences of friends and schoolmates. D1 is oriented towards his future life, and having so many social connections is very good for the days ahead.

D1 was not looking for a particular identity. From his interview, it can be said that D1 had only one identity. It might be different when D1 will grow up later on.

### 2) D1's Social life

- D1's school performances

D1 was in class five at the time of the interview, and this was a decisive year in his studies. At that junction, a decision had to be taken as to whether he will go high school or not. For D1, to go to high school was an attractive idea, and he really wanted to work harder to be selected to go to the University for further studies. His idea is to work hard to make his dream comes true. The first ambition of D1 was to become the greatest athlete worldwide in his generation. And later on he would like to become a computer engineer like his father. Because his father was his model.

- Peer group



D1 had many friends in Berlin. His friends are his source of motivation and he would not be able to achieve some success in his life without the support of his friends. D1 enjoyed his friendships very intensively and his friends were his motivation, rather than his family. His friends made him happy, and they encouraged him, and they were always there for him. D1 is even closer to his friends than to his siblings.

- Leisure

D1 is a fan of physical activity and he lived his passion through his sport activity. D1 also enjoyed skating. He also appreciated spending time with his friends who made him happy. The motivation to perform very good in sport emanated from his friends. He was proud of that and he enjoyed being with his friends in his leisure time.

### III. The future capabilities of D1 in Germany

#### 1) D1's good German language skills

D1 had a very good command of the German language. He decided to give his interview in German for he felt more comfortable when communicating in German. The language of communication in family Deumaga was French but D1 always spoke German with his parents. But he spent lot of time outdoor with his friends to have more possibilities to improve his German. This means that he had very good chances to improve on his language skills. D1 always addressed his parents in German just because he felt comfortable speaking in German. This point was also very important for he will never face certain problems regarding language issues. In Germany this point was decisive for his socialisation in the German context.

#### 2) Successful socialisation of D1 in Berlin

[D1, L 72/... Ich fühle mich Deutsch]

D1 said that he felt German.

D1 identified himself as a German, although his parents came from Cameroon. D1 had a very active social life outside his family in Germany. He had many friends, and his

friends made him very happy. He was also very active socially. And he was for instance member of a sport club in his neighbourhood, and he really enjoys being an athlete; this was the reason why he was also the best one. His ambition was also to be the best athlete in the world. Besides of the physical activity, D1 also enjoyed the company of his friends. He had many friends, and he thinks that his friends help him to be successful in his life. This means D1 would not be able to live in Germany without any social contact, and this is a very important basic statement for a bubbly social life.

### 3) Abstract of the interview with D1

D1 was a shy child but he was happy and satisfied with his life in Germany. He felt at home in Germany, and he fitted very well in the German social life. For this reason, D1 has a very developed friendship networking that motivated him and made him to be happy. D1 did have no element of the Cameroonian culture that has any direct influence on him. And he had paved his own way to perform in Germany. And his friendships played a central in that personal line of thought.

## 5. 4. 2. Analysis of the interview with D2

(July 14<sup>th</sup> 2013 at 07:00pm. Duration: #00:13:39#)

### Biography

D2 was born in 1978 in Cameroon. D2 was 35 years old at the time of the interview in 2013. D2 grew up in Cameroon, and he had been in Germany for 14 years at the time of the interview. D2 migrated to Germany as student in 1999, and at the moment of the interview in 2013, he was working in a private computer firm in Berlin, although he read history. D2 has two children and he was not married with his partner. He lived together with his children and his partner in Berlin.

### Paraphrase of the interview with D2

#### I. D2's perception of child poverty

##### 1) Wealth means having a family and being able to provide for it

D2 loved his family overall and this was his wealth. For him, being rich is a combination of two things: having a close family, i.e. his children and partner first; and providing for one's own family. D2 thinks he had the chance of enjoying both aspects altogether. D2 considered himself as being rich because he has a family, and he earns a living. D2 feels he is rich from the African viewpoint, but he did not consider himself as being financially rich. D2 also considered his children as wealth because they lived with their parents together and they were happy.

## 2) A large family is an asset for future

The family was a very important future step for D2, for he grew up with this education. D2 grew up in a very large family in Cameroon with seven children. The family has many steps for D2. The first stage of the family in Cameroon was with his parents and his 7 siblings, which was a very happy experience with his parents, and his 7 siblings.

The second stage of the family for D2 was the step after. D2 came to Germany for his studies and he met with his partner. He had 2 sons at the moment of the interview. For D2, this is the second step of the family because he has founded his own family. When he thinks of his family, it is first his partner, and his children.

The third step of the family for D2, was the extended family. For him, the extended family is the natural large family. The extended family includes his sisters and brothers, his mother (his father died long ago), his cousins, his aunts and uncles. D2 said he had a good connection with all his relatives in his large family.

For D2, the family as a whole includes the close and the extended family. The siblings of D2 did not live in Cameroon anymore, they were all living abroad. For D2 a very important value he kept from his large family is the notion of solidarity. His family members always stand together, and this value is visible in his family although relatives do not live together any longer.

## 3) Solidarity is an immutable family value

D2 thinks that solidarity is a natural value in the African family. He tried to practice it in his own family, and he wanted his children to acquire this family value for future. He

thinks solidarity strengthens family Cohesion. D2 took an example of solidarity from his own life. When he came to Germany, his brother helped him financially because he did not have a job. For D2, this is the least his brother could do for him, because solidarity in the African family is a natural value. D2 came to Germany in 1999 as a student. He had nothing to survive and his brother supported him financially during this first life period in Germany.

As D2 came to Germany, he left his family and all his friends in Cameroon. He had to begin a new life in Germany, and D2 now feels he is happy with his life in Germany.

D2 migrated to Germany as he was 22 years old, and he sees himself as a “late migrant”. He faced the challenges of the German culture and he also has to deal with his own cultural background. For he knows how struggling between two very different cultures can impact a person, he decided not to speak his mother tongue with his children. He thinks that language is not necessarily an essential point of a culture. Rather, he gave priority to family values such as solidarity, sociability or the sharing spirit. As a cultural value, D2 thinks he should teach his children the value of solidarity in the family because this is a natural value in the family. D2 also wanted to transmit his children other values such hard work, respect, and discipline. D2 learnt the same values from his parents, and he wants to pass them on to his children. Actually, D2 faces a challenge: he wanted to educate his children with his cultural background, but at the same time, he thinks that his children are Germans, for they were born and now grow up in Germany.

Normally, in the original large family of D2, people help each other, and support each other financially or with supplies. D2 does not substantially help relatives left at home, and he saw that as a luck, not having to financially help people at home. But he helped financially family members from time to time, like his mother, or his nephews. D2 has a lots of nieces and nephews in Cameroon.

## II. D2's socialisation in Germany

D2 came to Germany at age of 22. He just turned an adult at that time, and for this reason, D2 feels like swinging between two worlds:

[D2, L 190-192/...*je vis toujours entre deux mondes, parce que oui, effectivement, je suis tiraillé entre, voilà quoi, ma culture d'origine, et la culture de mon pays d'accueil*]

D2 acknowledged that he did not really fit in the German social life because of his cultural background. He said he does not really feel German, because of the cultural difference. He did not want to show any difference but he feels this cultural difference every day. D2 said he missed the human warmth of people in Africa, it can be said that this is part of the 'cultural background' he talked about. In a bid to re-ignite this African environment, D2 attempts to join some African organisations in Berlin. D2 did not mention any German friends of him in Germany. His social life was very different from his son's. It can be said that D2 struggles to recreate an African world in Berlin to be happy and his son D1 has a normal German social life.

## III. Abstract of the interview with D2

D2 felt daily cultural differences in his life in Berlin, and he will never feel German. But he thinks for his children, it might be different because they were born and are growing up in Germany. Although he said his children did not have any cultural problem, he would say that the German culture will dominate in their future life.

D2 thinks that his children have better futures chances in Germany than they might have had in Cameroon. Just with the fact that D2 migrates from Cameroon to Germany to look for a better life. He added that because Germany is a rich country, D2 was sure that his children will get a very good future life in Germany than they could expect in Cameroon.

Although D2 missed the warm weather and the warm company of African people of Cameroon, he felt part of the German society. D2 reduced the difference between people in Cameroon, and people in Germany to a cultural issue. He felt different in Berlin because of his cultural background.

D2 lived with his partner and their two sons in Berlin, but he did not exclude the possibility of going back home when he retires. The point is that D2 couldn't think of going back to Cameroon now because of his job and his young children in Germany.

D2 felt like he has to participate on both societies, the German and the Cameroonian alike. He feels like living in two different worlds. For he always compares his life in Germany and his former life experience in Cameroon. But D2 did not regret to have left his home country, because he feels happy in Germany. He will never consider himself as a native German for he was born and grew up in Cameroon.

## 5. 5. Partial conclusion: Cross-analysis of data

The data for this research was obtained from eight interviews with Cameroonian parents (A2, B2, C2, and D2) and with their children (A1, B1, C1, and D1) living in Berlin. This work is about the families: Atangana (A1 and A2), Bitchoga (B1 and B2), Camto (C1 and C2) and Deumaga (D1 and D1)<sup>9</sup>. The families were randomly selected; in other words, the sample population was made up of about 4 youth aged from eleven to seventeen years and their parents. There is not much information about families with Cameroonian background living in Berlin existing in the scientific research yet. This work is among the very first attempts with such sampling in Germany. For this reason, to draw a picture of Cameroonian people in Berlin, it was indispensable to let them express themselves and account for their own life experience. With the qualitative analysis of the data, this work set out to find out if the Cameroonian background impacts on the Capabilities of children with such background in Berlin. The main question of the investigation was to find out if the perception of child poverty in Cameroonian households could impact or affect the future Capabilities of their children in Berlin. A good deal of the sample does not play a decisive role if the work just aims at qualitatively evaluating the impact of the Cameroonian background on the Capability of the children in Cameroonian households in Berlin. With the Qualitative analysis of the data, this work should be able to present how Cameroonian people (parents and children alike) assess their own life in Berlin. With qualitative interviews, some new important topics for children with Cameroonian background in Berlin emerge, such as

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<sup>9</sup> These names are fictive to protect real identities of the concerned persons

the freedom, or the acute need to be considered in the society as 'Germans'. Those aspects could come out thanks to their open and honest answers. Of course, this work has more consistencies about the life experience of children with Cameroonian background in Berlin and can be used as reference for further research on children with migrant background in Germany as well.

The outcome shows something very new and interesting. Children with Cameroonian background have a totally different perception of child poverty compared to their parents. For these children, child poverty was more about lack of supplies, care, shelter or drugs, which is a very materialistic view. But for parents, child poverty is more of a cultural issue. It was not possible for Cameroonian parents to explain the notion of child poverty because they did not know this reality which definitely does not tie in with their cultural background. No explanations of child poverty were possible through languages and cultural values in the Cameroonian family inquiry. Children represent wealth for Cameroonian parents. But for their children, child poverty was a material issue combined with a basic needs and cares.

The difference in child poverty perception between parents and their children shows how the tie to the Cameroonian cultural background of both generations impacts their life. For Cameroonian parents in Berlin, it can be said that they were trying to live their culture in Germany, and their social life is restricted to African networks connections, for they missed their culture of origin. For this reason they do not have a limited active social life in Berlin. But for children, it was very important to have many friends to make their social life active. These children with a Cameroonian background were happy just because they had a lot of friends. Besides the family values they have at home, they performed very well in the German society. And having an active social life is an essential asset for their future life in Germany. The way children with Cameroonian background perform in Berlin was very different from the way their parents did. With their dual nature, it can be said that children with Cameroonian background in Berlin better performed than their parents in the German society. One smoking gun evidence is found in the language issue. Children with Cameroonian background had perfect German language skills, contrary to most of their parents who did not. It can be seen in the different languages spoken during interviews. Each interviewee was free to decide in which language they would like to make their

interview and all the children taking part of this inquiry chose German as the communication language, for they felt more comfortable in speaking German. But all parents taking part of this inquiry chose their first language they felt comfortable in, and it was either French or English. The fact that Cameroonian parents did not show very good German skills had no direct negative impact on the way their children mastered that language. An important point that should be noted here is that these children with Cameroonian background had lots of friends and they really enjoyed the time spent with their friends outdoor. This was an advantage that helped them improve on their language skills rapidly enough. These children truly value the time spending with their friends outside and they felt the need to improve in the German language skill very good do not be different than their friends and to better communicate with them.

A slight difference should be made between Cameroonian mothers and Cameroonian fathers. Cameroonian mothers met in this research were mostly focussed on their culture and were working to pass on their Cameroonian culture to their children through the food, the way they dressed or their mother tongue. But the fathers were more concerned with the transmission of family values to their children. It can be said that the fathers inquiry for this research were more open than the mothers to enhance the German culture in the education of their children. The fathers' argument is that their children were born and were growing up in Germany, so the German culture is part of their personality and immediate environment. The fact that both fathers inquiry were working at the time of the interviews in 2013 and the mothers were not might be one explanation of this difference in perceiving the education of Cameroonian children in Berlin.

Through this, children with Cameroonian background in Berlin had developed particular skills to bring together the Cameroonian and the German cultures in their life in order to better succeed in the German society. The dual nature of these children with Cameroonian background in Berlin is something very powerful that helps them better succeed in preparing their future in Germany.



## 6. General Conclusion

This research is an empirical analysis of the Capabilities of children with Cameroonian background in Germany. It sampled children who have Cameroonian parents living in Berlin. Although the analysis in this work focuses on Cameroonian households in Berlin, in Germany, it is not a pure migration research analysis. On the contrary, this work was an analysis of the Capabilities of a particular group of children. For instance, it has to do with the analysis of the Cameroonian Diaspora in their households in Germany. The aim was to analyse the impact of the Cameroonian cultures in the Capabilities of these children in Berlin. Most people issuing from the Cameroonian Diaspora in Berlin have acquired the German citizenship; this is the reason why we focussed on 'children with a Cameroonian background' independently from their nationality. As said before Africa is the continent with the most mobile population in the world. And so, many Africans migrated to Europe since the 1920s, the first image of Africans in Germany can be traced back from the year 1198. These movements from Africa to Germany have notable impacts in these African families core. This research makes a focus in a particular African migrant group in Germany, and analyses the specific impact of this on their children.

The goal of this research was to analyse the future capabilities of children with Cameroonian background in Berlin. And it appears that those children had developed particular abilities to perform in the German society. In short, this analysis showed that children with a Cameroonian background in Berlin developed particular skills to give the best of their potential in their future life in Germany. The research process of interviewing Cameroonian parents and their children in Berlin, was an attempt to find out their perception of child poverty, and the way they deal with it. It appeared that Cameroonian parents were not able to establish a link between the notion of poverty and their children, for the concept of child poverty does not exist in the culture they grew up in. The Cameroonian parent involved in the research all grew up in Cameroon, and even in their different mother tongue, the concept of child poverty does not exist.

Conversely, children with Cameroonian background in Berlin had a clear materialistic and wellbeing perception of child poverty although they did not see themselves as being poor. In fact, for children with a Cameroonian background in Berlin the notion of child

poverty exclusively refers to material needs, lack of care or shortage of money. It can be said that children with a Cameroonian background in Berlin have an objective view of child poverty.

But according to the particular Cameroonian value system, children with a Cameroonian background were not considered as being poor in their families as long as they have siblings. For Cameroonian parents, children represent the wealth and it was not possible for this parents to imagine that a child could be poor. The only one exception was in case of single child, who is considered according to the Cameroonian culture as “poor”. They were all trying to have more than one child because according to their cultural background, a lone child is a poor child.

Simplice Kitleur Lekoumo’s research demonstrated in 2007 that the (material) poverty of a Cameroonian child has nothing to do with the poverty of the household. This is the case of Cameroonian children in Berlin, for the Cameroonian parents in Germany tried to reproduce the Cameroonian culture the way they experienced it at home. The notion of child from the Cameroonian parent’s point of view is a very decisive factor in the way they deal with their children. Cameroonian parents involved in this research grew up in Cameroon and they would like to breed their children with the traditional values they grew up with. And one important point in the Cameroonian culture is the value of solidarity in the family. This means that relatives always have to stand together. People with many children in the family do not necessarily make sure they have the financial means to take care of their own children, because children are considered as belonging to the whole community; and each adult is considered to be a parent of any child in the large family. This generates a chain of solidarity, where people are in care financially and in terms of supplies for the children, independently of their natural parents.

This work was an analysis of this particular perception of child poverty and its impact in the future Capabilities of children with Cameroonian background living in Berlin. One motivation analysing this particular African cultural group was to contribute to the theoretical debate on the assessment of child deprivation from an authentic African view point on the issue.

The analysis of the capability of children is second to none, and thus have to be innovative. Analysing child poverty in the long run means being to consider things

through the capabilities view. This research's core is the notion of capabilities for the Capability Approach of Sen is the best way to evaluate how able are Cameroonian children in Berlin to fulfil the life they truly want to have in the future. This research was also very interesting for having an innovative dynamics in the area of child poverty analysed among children with migrant background in Germany (Butterwegge 2010). This research proceeded by analysing the Cameroonian families from the core in the micro level in Berlin to better understand how their cultural background impacts in the Capabilities of their children. The result of this analysis was completing the research field in two points: firstly, the innovation was to apply the Capability Approach to children, and secondly, is to having been able to analyse the Capabilities of children with migrant background in Germany.

To fill this scientifically gap, this research has pondered over the perception of child poverty in Cameroonian families with children living in Berlin, and had confronted it to their Capabilities in the German context. Thus it appears that the Cameroonian cultural idea is very strong in parents' mind, but the transmission process to the next generation living in Germany at the moment of the interview was very problematic. In fact, for Cameroonian parents living in Berlin, culture played a very important role in the education they gave to their children for they were expecting children to be receptive to the values they themselves grew up with. The obstacle is just that children with Cameroonian background in Berlin, were not ready to accept this culture and enjoy it as such. The children with Cameroonian background met in this research have developed their own way to conceptualise on the one hand the life and the heritage of their cultural background in the family, and on the other hand, what they can retain of their own life experience in Germany. The first step was to find out the perception of child poverty in Cameroonian families, before analysing its impact on the capabilities of their children. It appears that Cameroonian parents in Berlin cannot conceive their children as being poor the reason being that the concept of child poverty does not exist in their cultural value system. The notion of child poverty was absent in the mother tongue of the families sampled in this research, and these parents were not able to think of their children in term of poverty even if they were financially needy. The second finding was the perception of wealth in Cameroonian families in Berlin. Cameroonian parents in Berlin through their culture think that having many children means being wealthy. For

this reason, each family interviewed for this research had at least two children, following to the Cameroonian cultural background, children are wealth.

The main objective was to analyse the perception of child poverty in Cameroonian families in Berlin according to their cultural background, and then find out how it impacts the Capabilities of children with Cameroonian background in Berlin. It appeared that Cameroonian parents perceive child poverty very different than their children in Berlin. For Cameroonian parents in Berlin, the notion of child poverty cannot be conceptualised. They cannot associate the poverty reality to their children because, for them the children are their wealth. At the same time, children with Cameroonian background in Berlin have a clear materialistic conception of child poverty. They assimilate child poverty to the lack of money, health, care, family, shelter, toys, and family. It appears that the Cameroonian parents do not identify with the reality of child poverty as such, for they grew up in a context where this does not play any role because their relatives always stand together. The children with Cameroonian background in Berlin grew up in a new context with very different realities and they have developed a kind of hybrid identity. In fact children with Cameroonian background in Berlin acknowledge child poverty as a reality regardless of the cultural consideration of their parents, who think that any child is but wealth.

Therefore one break of the values system appears between the first Cameroonian migrant generation in Germany, and the second migrant generation in Berlin, that is between Cameroonian parents and their children.

Children with Cameroonian background in Berlin develop particular skills to better perform in the German society. Some examples can be taken from the importance of the mother tongue for Cameroonian parents, which does not play the same role for their children. For children with Cameroonian background in Berlin, it is more important to fluently speak German than the mother tongue of their parents. Thus, Cameroonian parents would like to speak their mother tongue at home with their children as the main communication language, but this does not work for the children with Cameroonian roots feel comfortable in speaking German, even within the family. In the case where the children were able to understand the mother tongue spoken at home and they were

replying to their parents in German. This first break of the culture through the language vehicle in Cameroonian households in Berlin is one explanation why the value concept between Cameroonian parents and their children in Berlin is changing. For instance, the perception of child poverty by Cameroonian parents in Berlin is very different from that of their own children.

For a Cameroonian parent in Berlin a child might not be considered as being poor for children represent wealth. But for their children the concept of child poverty is a reality that they were able to define in term of material and of well-being issues. It can be said that children with Cameroonian background in Berlin have an objective view of the concept of child poverty, and so, they are better prepared to know how to deal with this. For that reason, children with Cameroonian background in Berlin were more likely to work in their life to make the best of their life in Germany.

Children with Cameroonian background in Berlin are a particular restricted migrant group in Berlin and represent a very good adaptation example of migrants in Germany. Cameroonian parents in Berlin have a particular perception of the concept of child poverty and this has a major impact on the Capabilities of their children. Through their language and their family system, Cameroonian parents do not set a link between the notion of poverty and their children. Most of their investment is done in children's issues because children originally represent an investment for future to Cameroonian parents who grew up in a context without a structured social system. To them, children represent an investment to secure their old days.

Cameroonian children in Berlin represent a very important human potential for Germany, for the fertility rate in Germany in 2009 was 1,3 children for each woman (Bertram & Bertram 2009: pp. 98). This means that the population in Germany is ageing and decreasing. To compensate the missing numbers, the inclusion of migrant children in the German society may be revisited. The reason is that migrants' children born and bred in Germany do no more look for where they belong, whether they belong to the country of origin of their parents, or to Germany. These children should not have the dilemma to choose between Cameroon and Germany. Because, according to the German citizenship law passed in 2000, these migrant children born in Germany have to

choose their nationality by the age of 23 or they will lose their Germany passport. These children were born and bred in Germany, they speak fluent German and they feel German. This might be the target with the new law proposal to make Germany a welcoming home for migrant children born and bred in Germany. On the identity of children, Krappmann said it is not possible to imagine a perfect values transmission from one generation to the other, because the communication and societal interaction change. Krappmann suggests that a very simple socialization model within children will be designed to better deal with the contradictions of life.

The National Council of Welfare published an annual statistical profile of poverty in Canada called Poverty Profile, and for the year 1998, this was its conclusion: “There is no one single defining portrait of child poverty” (National Council of Welfare Reports 2001: pp.54). It must be kept in mind that the problems of child poverty are simply human problems. Which means that we should always focus on children because “life in any of its phases is exceedingly complex, and the key to its understanding must be wrought in the furnace of fiery research, a product of many refined specialties” (Bossard 1927: pp. 643-644).

In this research aimed at analysing the Capabilities of young Cameroonian children in Berlin following the cultural background of their parents. The research went further analysing the relationship parents-children and children-family in Berlin. It appeared that Cameroonian parents in Berlin grew up in a completely different context in Cameroon compared to where their children were now growing. But the point is that Cameroonian Parents in Berlin try to bring up their children in the same way they were bred whereas they are in a completely different German context. Through this, they face many difficulties relating to education; there is the environment where the family is moving and the kind of education children deal with outside.

Professor Bertram summarises the challenges of children in society as follows:

“In einer Gesellschaft, in der im Prinzip jedes Individuum mit jedem konkurriert, ist die Sozialisation von Kindern schwierig, weil Kinder noch auf die Solidarität und Stabilität einer Verwandtschaftsgruppe angewiesen sind” (Bertram 1981: pp. 17)

Solidarity can be seen as fellowship or union of responsibilities and interest among different members of a community, and here, by community we mean the family. For

Cameroonian parents in Berlin, the family is seen horizontally. This means that every family comes from the union of two other bigger families. For example, for the Ewondo people in the South of Cameroon for example, the nuclear family (“Ndâ Bot”) is the core of two bigger fusions: the first lineage (“MVOG”) and the clan (“Ayong”).

Cameroonian families are then considered as a wider group of people descending from same ancestor, or united through marriage. Young Cameroonian people living in Berlin get from their parents an education with the same traditional values. It appears from the interviews that Cameroonian parents living in Berlin consider the family more as a clan than a nuclear group, and they bring their children up that way. In fact, in the Cameroonian families in Berlin, the notion of family is a very extended and loose one for Cameroonians. Cousins are considered like brothers and sisters, and uncle and aunts are considered as parents for children with Cameroonian background in Berlin. An example is B1, a young boy of 16 years old, who lives in Berlin with his aunt, and she is considered like B1’s own mother. His cousins are considered like his brothers. In his interview, B1 also says that his aunt is also his mother, and he will treat her the same way he would do with his biological mother. This mainly has to do with taking care of her in old age. This leads to the social functioning in Cameroonian families in Berlin.

This closeness between family members is the reason why Cameroonian families in Berlin are not isolated entities; they help each other and mostly financially. It means that if somebody has less money than his ‘brother’ or ‘sister’, he can expect financial support from any relative who has more. Any wealthy person in the family has the duty of giving a helping hand to other relatives, because the family is one and whole. This education is the one that appears in interviews with Cameroonian people in Berlin. Teenagers with Cameroonian background in Berlin already think of supporting family members from their wages in their future life although they live in a European society. This shows the very strength of this education they have received from their parents. The family is the cornerstone of Cameroonian education and this is learned early in their young age. This young boy of 16 years old said he will save money to support relatives in future if needed. This vision is sharing his belongings with other relatives, and not piling up a personal fortune for oneself. Young people with Cameroonian background in Berlin make their well-being dependent on relatives’ satisfaction. It means that if they can make their relative happy, they will find self-fulfilment in so doing. It is important

to note that, for people who are materially wealthy in the Cameroonian mind, it is very important to share one's property with relatives, so that these rich people can feel important and 'helpful' in their community. That is what makes a person 'important' in the group. This culture of sharing is one of the important pillars in the education given by Cameroonian people, and the youth with Cameroonian background in Berlin have confirmed this. Mamadou Dia (1981) calls this "the African customary duties" (*devoirs coutumiers africains*). Everyone must assume his *customary duties* before expecting the ardent support of the group.

But this family model with relatives in the extended family is dependent on each family member, and has some disadvantages for young people. Another crucial point is the freedom of young people in the Cameroonian family. The young people with Cameroonian background interviewed wish to be free in their relation with the family. They want to feel free to concentrate on their own life, and personal wishes. A1 is such an example, for he did not feel free in his family because he needed more freedom to better improve in his own life. He was 16 years old and wanted to feel free in his life to decide alone about his life but not responsible of the whole large family. The Cameroonian family in Berlin is a fusional group where every member feels responsible for others and vice versa. The young teenager B1 also dislikes such a responsibility in his family and took examples to his friends who live very independently from their family. Some authors analyse this phenomenon as a confrontation between tradition and modernism:

"Die Situation für die Zweite Generation präsentiert sich als Leben zwischen Tradition und Moderne, zwischen Familialismus bzw. Kollektivismus und Individualismus" (Hämmig 2000: 38)

But at the same time some of them do not really feel part of the German society and time spent with relatives or other Cameroonian fellows are considered as "Cameroonian luxury".

As seen in this research, the interviews with the youth with Cameroonian background in Berlin allowed us to observe that young Cameroonian people in Berlin present a split identity. On one side, they feel African and live as such in their families, and on the other side, they live a completely different experience at school or with friends outdoors. They feel like being in Africa at home and in Germany outside. By "African



life”, they mean how people behave in the family. For example, one of the children interviewed lives with his relatives, who take care of him, and not with his biological parents. But he is considered as a child by his relatives with whom he lives. The family members in the Cameroonian family in Berlin stand together and their children are educated in Solidarity ways as well. A1 compared this solidarity net in his family with a “football team”. Every day, teenagers with a Cameroonian background in Berlin make the African experience in their way of live at home with the family, and at school, they have to make efforts to understand the German way of thinking to feel part of the class they attend at school. Thus, children with Cameroonian background in Germany feel as belonging to two very different worlds in the same context. Depending on their sensitivity, or on their personal experience, they can make some space to build their own identity in a personal way. The identity issue is a very important question for people who decided to make their life abroad.

To round off, it is of high importance that children even with migrant background feel well in the country they live to better perform in their future life. As Hilgers stated: “Eine Gesellschaft ohne glückliche Kinder ist eine Gesellschaft ohne Zukunft” (Bertram & al. 1993: pp.95).



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## ONLINE RESOURCES

African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child :

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## APPENDIX:

### CONSENT FORM

#### Consent form (Formulaire de consentement)

IMPORTANT NOTICE: PLEASE READ CAREFULLY THIS CONSENT FORM BEFORE YOU SIGN IT, YOUR QUESTIONS ARE VERY WELCOME TO AVOID MISUNDERSTANDINGS. YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO ASK FOR A COPY OF THIS CONSENT FORM IF YOU DEEM NECESSARY /

(AVIS IMPORTANT: VEUILLEZ S'IL VOUS PLAÎT LIRE ATTENTIVEMENT CE FORMULAIRE DE CONSENTEMENT AVANT DE LE SIGNER, VOS QUESTIONS SONT LA BIENVENUE POUR ÉVITER DES MALENTENDUS. VOUS AVEZ LE DROIT DE DEMANDER SI VOUS LE DÉSIREZ UNE COPIE DE CE FORMULAIRE DE CONSENTEMENT).

#### Declaration of agreement:

I, Mr./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_, explicitly agree to participate to this recorded interview conducted by Mrs. Diane F. Brahms on the (date) \_\_\_\_\_ in Berlin (Germany); it can be used for her PhD research relating to the perception of child poverty.

I had the opportunity to ask questions on the processing of my personal information and I have understood the answers she gave me.

I was informed that my confidential information will be treated as strictly confidential data, and I authorized Mrs. Brahms to use such information for her PhD research (The perception of child poverty).

I agree that excerpts of the interview may be transcribed and published within the framework of her PhD research. Furthermore, she informed me that my private information may be used in the research field for further studies and I willingly agreed with this. Mrs. Brahms also told me that I could unconditionally renounce this agreement anytime without suffering any penalty on my person before the defence and publication of her Work.

I understand the importance of my declarations for her PhD research (The perception of Child poverty). From now on, I abandon any claim of reward, compensation or payment in any forms in return.

I hereby declare that I have read and understood in its entirety the content of this consent form and I fully agree with its terms.



### (Declaration de consentement)

(Moi, M./ Mme \_\_\_\_\_ accepte expressément que cette interview enregistrée de moi par Madame Diane Brahms en date du \_\_\_\_\_

à Berlin (Allemagne) peut être utilisée pour sa thèse de doctorat

J'ai eu la possibilité de poser des questions sur le traitement de mes informations personnelles et j'atteste y avoir compris les réponses. J'ai été informé que mes informations confidentielles seront traitées dans la stricte confidentialité et j'autorise Madame Brahms d'utiliser ces informations pour sa thèse de Doctorat (La perception de la pauvreté chez les enfants). J'accepte que des extraits de l'interview soient manuscrits et publiés dans le cadre de sa thèse de Doctorat. De plus, J'ai été informé que mes données personnelles seront utilisées dans le cadre de recherches scientifiques futures et je l'accepte volontairement. J'étais également informé par Madame Brahms que je peux, à tout moment et sans conditions avant publication de son livre, révoquer ce consentement sans que cela cause un tort quelconque à ma personne. Je comprends l'importance de mes déclarations pour sa thèse de Doctorat (La perception de la pauvreté chez les enfants). Je renonce maintenant et dans le futur à toute rémunération, compensation ou paiement de toute nature que ce soit pour cela. Je déclare avoir lu & compris l'entier contenu de ce formulaire de consentement et d'y adhérer entièrement).

Berlin, Germany

Place (Lieux) -----

Date-----

Sign (Signature) :-----

## CONTENTS OF THE CD-ROM:

- The PhD-Text in Pdf document
- Transcript of interviews with family Atangane
- Transcript of the interviews with family Bitchoga
- Transcript of the interviews with famiy Camto
- Transcript of the interviews with family Deumaga